

COMIC BOOK
ART TIPS & TECHNIQUES

BLUE LINE PRO'S

SKETCH

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MANGA

FIGURE
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TIPS FOR
BETTER
COLORS
IN COMICS

LIBERTY MEADOW'S
FRANKCHO

SKETCH MAGAZINE

\$5.95



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A Note...

Do you consider yourself an entertainer?

The definition...

entertainer n. a person who entertains professionally [New Lexicon WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY of the English Language, 1990 Edition].

If you write, draw, ink, letter, color, edit or publish a comic, you are an entertainer. As entertainers, we need to represent this industry with the highest standards. Comics are making a slow and steady rebound and with this growth, new fans will be looking at what we create. We as entertainers need to be accessible to these fans.

Fans buy and read our books. Readers tell their friends about cool comics. Friends go to the shops to buy comics and become fans. Then it starts over again.

How do you build that fan base? Be accessible. Set up store signings, give copies of your comics away, and do talks at libraries, conventions, and other places. Produce your comics often. The more buyers see from you, the more likely they may pick up your book.

This issue marks our second full year of publishing *Sketch* magazine. This is a great accomplishment, considering that when I wanted to start *Sketch*, no one really understood what I wanted to publish.

I'd like to give many thanks to Mr. Frank Cho. I was lucky enough to pick up *Liberty Meadows* from issue one, and continue to be a fan. At first I was worried when I found out that we were getting a "how to" from Insight Studios - I expected two ovals and then a completed illustration, as Frank's fans know he has done in the past. Imagine my surprise when John Staton's Manga Brandy article showed up with all the manga styled illustration. Wow! Mark Wheatley and Insight Studios have gone above and beyond the call of duty for this issue.

I'd like to thank Mike Carriglitto at Dark Horse. Without him, we would never have gotten the green light for Chris Dreier's incredible *Angel* inking article.

Also, I'd like to welcome back Chuck Dixon for a return article. Now will you please take my name off of your website hit list; I believe your *Sketch* #7 is one of our most reordered back issues!

I've been very lucky to work with a great bunch of creators. Even those who have had to leave us because of time restraints still answer email and letters from readers. Thanks all.

Next year - Neil Gaiman, Ron Garney, and many more. Stay tuned.

Thank you for the last two years. It's been a blast.

Take care,



Bob Hickey

bobh@bluelinepro.com

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LIBERTY MEADOWS

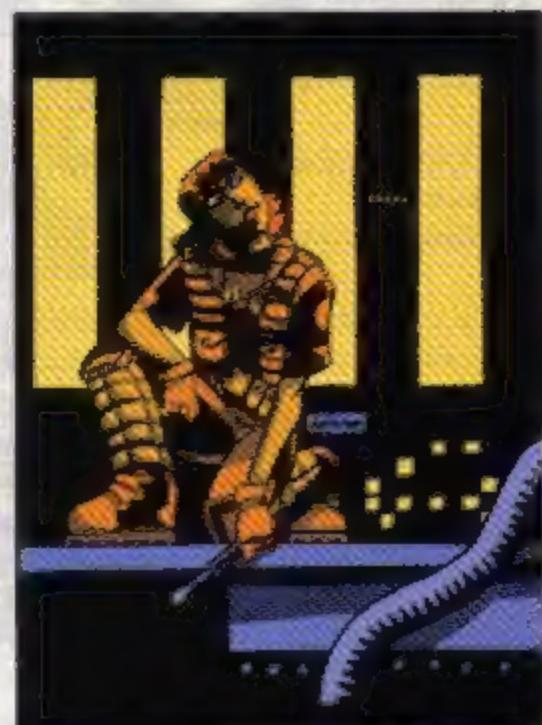


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BLUE LINE PRO'S SKETCH

VOL. 2 - NUMBER 6 - ISSUE #12
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Bob Hickey

Along with his duties with Sketch Magazine, he has been the creative force behind Blood & Roses, StormQuest and Tempered Steele. He currently has a new Blood and Roses series in the works along with his new creator owned series Race Danger which both should be appearing at BLP Comics.

Bob is one of the co-founders of Blue Line Productions, www.bluelinepro.com. He can be reached at bob@bluelinepro.com



Aaron Hübrich

was going to be the next great fantasy illustrator, but something caught his attention in college, and he never looked back...Comics! Aaron has worked in comics since his self publishing days in 1997. It was then that he made a book titled Spellcaster, which began his understanding of the publishing part of the industry. He went on to hone his skills at the now defunct Checker Comics as a computer colorist and designer, then later for Blueline Pro. His other credits include coloring for Image Comics. He lives in the Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati area, minutes away from a city that has shown an enormous amount of patriotism recently. I'm proud of our community and our entire country...We are united.



Klaus

Born at the beginning of recorded history, KLAUS was cryogenically frozen by a coalition of secret societies, for reasons still unclear to this day. He was released from stasis in the early Seventies (along with his "maternal" twin FIGG) to achieve one goal: Create the masterpiece that would be called *SUPER GRAPE*.

Now living a seemingly normal life in the Midwest. He also enjoys spending time with family and friends.



Beau Smith

created and writes Parts Unknown currently at Image Comics, writer of The Undertaker for Chaos Comics, The Tenth, Wynonna Earp, Spawn: Book Of Souls, Wolverine/Shi, Batman/Wildcat and the upcoming cross over-Xena/Wonder Woman and several Star Wars stories for Dark Horse. www.sacredstudios.com/partsunknown



Tom Bierbaum

, with wife Mary, has scripted such comics as Legion of Super-Heroes and The Heckler for DC Comics, Xena and Return to Jurassic Park for Topps Comics, Star for Image Comics and Dead Kid Adventures, a creator owned project by Knight Press.



Flint Henry's

comic career began in the waning days of the independent market of the '80's, where his frenetic and violent style enjoyed a popular run on the fondly remembered Grimjack at First Comics. Over the years to follow, some personal favorites include Lawdog; a creator owned character done with longtime friend Chuck Dixon from Marvel/Epic, as well as numerous Batman related projects from DC. He's also produced a variety of comic product for Todd Toys (now McFarlane Toys), Image, SQP Inc, and Chaos!, as well as Eclipse, Dark Horse, Palladium, and others.



M² a.k.a. Mike Maydak

has been taken under-wing as the patawan in training at the Blue Line Pro ranch. He is learning much from the experienced crew at Sketch about the comic industry and has mastered the technique of "getting lunch". He often contributes in the form of graphic design, writing, and editorial work. He is currently attending school at NKU with a Journalism major. On the side, he works on his fantasy novel.



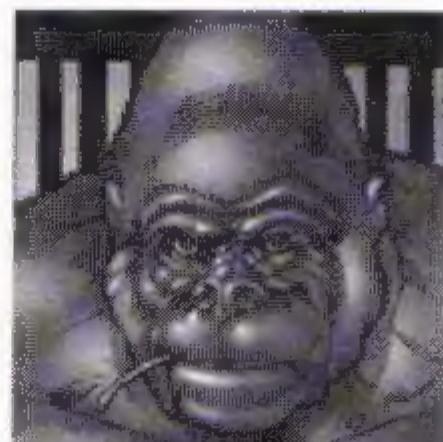
Paul Sizer

teaches graphic design at Western Michigan University, runs his own freelance design and illustration business, and in his spare time writes, illustrates and designs his comic book LITTLE WHITE MOUSE, published by BLP Comics. Paul lives and works in Kalamazoo, Michigan. See more of Paul's work at: www.littlewhitemouse.com.



Chuck Dixon

The amazingly prolific and popular Charles Dixon punches up Sketch with something the Action-Miester knows plenty about: guns. With scripts flying like 7.62's in Somalia, no one knows if he burns out a barrel or a word processor faster, but when it comes to chambering a round or charging a plot with great characters, there's always plenty of excitement and satisfied comic fans around a Dixon comic mag. Keep your head under the wire and head for the racks to get Chuck's upcoming Superman/Tarzan mini-series from DC and Dark Horse or his next Doom mini from Marvel.



Bill Baker

Since entering the field in late 1998, Bill Baker has established himself as one of the preeminent interviewers in the comics journalism community. After getting his start as a reporter on a now-defunct website, he graduated to doing both long and short form interviews for two of the best known comic book sites on the web, Comic Book Resources and Wizard World. This lead to his articles and interviews appearing in print magazines, including *Comic Book Marketplace* and *Comic Buyers' Guide*, as well as *Fantastic Visions: The Art of Matt Busch*, published by Avatar Press in 2001.

Bill's work combines a wide-ranging knowledge of both the art form and its practitioners with a deep and abiding respect for its rich history. If there's any single aspect that sets Bill's work apart from most reportage, it's the relaxed, conversational tone that pervades his interviews.



Mitch Byrd's

clean, open style has filled the pages of a variety of comics as diverse as Malibu's Dinosaurs For Hire, DC's Guy Gardner: Warrior, Starship Troopers for Dark Horse, and Jaguar God at Verotik, to name just a few. He's currently working on a number of freelance projects and illustrations for White Wolf, as well as looking forward to the release of *The Art of Mitch Byrd*, a collection of his non-sequential work from SQP.

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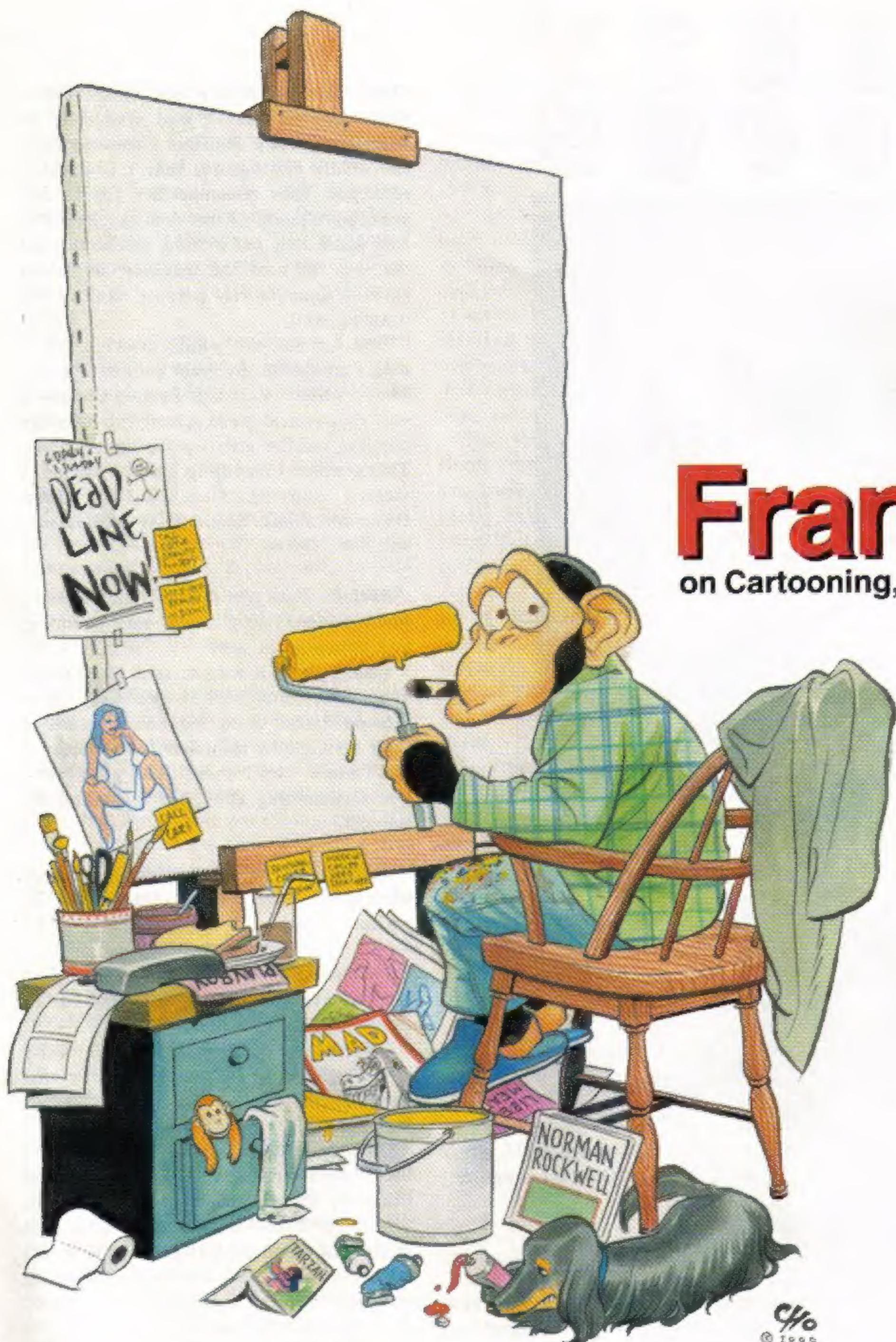
Comic books are a fun media! Blue Line Productions' goals are aimed toward enhancing this art form - and others - through knowledge and quality art supplies. We try hard to make certain that you, the reader, have the comic book technique information you require for your personal enjoyment of this great field.

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Women Monkeys Oil Painting

Frank Cho on Cartooning, Illustration and Painting



an interview conducted by Bill Baker

I first met Frank Cho at the Insight Studios Group booth during the Comic Con International: San Diego show in 1996. Mark Wheatley introduced us, noting that Frank had just signed a much-coveted syndicate deal based upon the strength of his college strip, *University2*. Some time later, I walked away bearing a big grin on my face, a copy of the newly-published *University2: The Angry Years* strip collection, and a knowing certainty that we were all in for quite a treat when Cho's work finally hit the papers. For the duration of the show I made sure to tell as many people as I could to keep an eye open for the work of this bright young artist, for surely there was a kind of greatness growing here.

What hardly anyone could have predicted, though, was just how popular Cho's strip, *Liberty Meadows*, would become with his legion of fans — in spite of the continual interference and censorship of politically correct editors and other self-appointed moral guardians. Nor could it have been easily foreseen that his original illustrations and paintings would be so fiercely sought after by discerning collectors of fine art that recently one of his works reportedly sold for \$5000 on the eBay auction website.

All of which only proves my innate talent for stating the obvious, and for underestimating even Frank's prodigious natural talent at illustration and storytelling.

In the extensive interview that follows, Frank talks about his life-long fascination with drawing, his diverse influences, and outlines his approach to creating art, be it a comic strip, a cover or pin-up, or a painting. He also reveals the various reasons for his leaving the syndicate and what he hopes to accomplish by taking *Liberty Meadows* into the strictly comic book and trade reprint formats, and even provides some details for the other projects that he'll be doing in the near, and the not-so-near, future.

LIBERTY MEADOWS



Sketch: Well, Frank, let's talk about your early years first. When did you first start drawing? Was that when you were really young?

Frank Cho: Yeah, I started drawing [young. Basically,] ever since I could, pretty much, grab a pencil and scribble. I started pretty much since I could stand and walk around, I guess.

Sketch: Did you start with the usual childhood materials: A crayon and the wall, then? [General laughter.]

Cho: Yeah, and also underneath the table. Me and my Brother used to draw under the table, underneath the table, [on its underside,] kind of like the Sistine Chapel. [General laughter.]

Actually, my Mom saved a bunch of drawings that I did when I was in kindergarten, and they look like a typical six-year-olds stuff. So I guess, just through practice, I got better.

Sketch: Were the subjects typical Kindergarten fare, or were you already going for the "animals and beautiful babes" mix?

Cho: Just typical, average stuff. Army men. Planes. Tanks. [General laughter.]

Sketch: "Go Joe!" right?

Cho: Right.

Sketch: Have you ever had any real formal art training, or are you completely self-taught?

Cho: I'm completely self taught. I really don't know how everything came to be. I guess it's just through sheer practice and good genes. I inherited my Dad's artistic talent and my sense of humor from my Mom. I learned to draw by copying other artists, and, luckily for me, early on I kind of zeroed in on all the great artists who had some sort of a classically trained background. I remember as a kid, I used to copy a lot of Norman Rockwell. And, actually, I kind of had that knack for copying things. I guess I had pretty decent hand-eye coordination.

Early on, I guess around second or third grade, my parents told me that they noticed that I had started to excel at drawing. My Mom and Dad recall a portrait of Jimmy

Carter that I drew they were amazed with; they thought that I had traced it or something. They said that I showed them the small photograph that I used as a reference. They remember that fondly, and were quite proud of me. And my Dad also said that I drew this buffalo, and he thought that was real neat. But that was the earliest recollection that my parents have of me drawing well.

And for me, the whole drawing talent didn't register in my brain until fifth grade. That's when I started collecting comics. I was your typical grade school kid, basically copying off the artist in the comic book. That's where everything kind of started. I started copying Don Newton, John Buscema, Frank Frazetta, Al Williamson, and John Byrne.

Sketch: What was it about their work of that time that really caught your attention, and appealed to you?

Cho: I think it was, at first, the subject matter. The comic book, I should say. From then on, I kind of started studying each of their styles, how they handled anatomy. I don't know why I chose those guys, but I guess something about them sparked my interest.

Sketch: Well, I think with Frazetta at least, what sparked your interest is kinda obvious.

Cho: Right.

Sketch: It's right about that point in your life, too, that your interest in the full-bodied woman began, it sounds like.

Cho: Right, right. Frazetta has a really huge, underlying influence on me to this day. Something about Frazetta work that's so visceral.

Frazetta just caught me at a ripe age. I know I discovered Frazetta when I was about thirteen, when I was in middle school, actually. And the Frazetta thing just kind of swallowed me, mind and body. I know that for like a solid year I was copying anything that was Frazetta, and I guess, somehow, that got ingrained into me.

But, lucky for me, before Frazetta, I was really into Don Newton, who was just absolutely a wonderful draftsman. He was doing Batman at the time, I think. The first Don Newton comic book that got me going.

It was actually Don Newton, more than anyone else, who made me fall in love with the comic book medium. It was *Detective* comic issue, #509. I first discovered it in fifth grade. It was penciled by Don Newton, and inked by Dan Adkins.

Sketch: That was a great pairing.

Cho: Oh yeah. I know that Don Newton actually passed away around that same time when I first discovered that *Detective* comic issue. That issue was at the bottom of the old comic book pile at the local library, and already was like three years old,

something like that. And I just remember opening it up — and it was Batman versus Catman, and Catman has kidnapped Catwoman — and my jaw just dropped to the floor when I saw the drawing. Absolutely gorgeous drawing. That day was [the first time I thought,] "Oh my god, I got to do this for a living!" type of thing, you know? An epiphany. [General laughter.]

And then, through Don Newton, I started looking into other artists who had a very similar style. So I kind of gravitated toward John Buscema.

Sketch: What about Buscema's work caught your eye?

Cho: He made things look easy. His drawings had a simplicity to them with the right amount of dramatic flair and classical elegance. Come to think of it, his book, *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*, was a big eye opener for me.

Sketch: What about Byrne? Was it the vitality of his storytelling that grabbed you?

Cho: Yeah. Byrne was an interesting case, because I know that, early on at a young age, I really enjoyed these classically trained guys. But Byrne was something else. His stuff was more style than substance. But Byrne had this tremendous [sense of] storytelling, great design sense, and also he had ...

There's a certain passion about his work that I really enjoyed. Like, Byrne actually stood out from all the others, because something about Byrne is just so wonderful. I don't know how to explain it. One of my favorite comics was by John Byrne: *Fantastic Four* #250. The X-Factor [cross-over], where the Skrulls were disguised as the X-Men and Gladiator would go around kicking their butts, and the Fantastic Four got in their way, [trying] to stop them, and they got their butts kicked. But that was one of my favorite comic books. I still have it, somewhere. It's down in the basement. [Appreciative general fanboy laughter] But John Byrne had this absolutely incredible eye for detail, I thought. He and George Perez had this incredible knack for details that kids love. And, at that age, I was really into details more than anything else. So, John Byrne was one of my big heroes back then.

And so was George Perez. I remember I used to collect *The New Teen Titans* by Marv Wolfman and George Perez, and I just remember being in awe of their eye for detail, John Byrne and George Perez. They were absolutely stunning.

And then I eventually got out of that phase and got back into draftsmanship, again. Just sheer anatomy. And then, that's when I discovered Frazetta, Frazetta, Al Williamson, Mark Schultz, Adam Hughes, Garcia-Lopez, etc.

Sketch: You know, one thing that's just occurred to me about that particular era of Byrne's work, and especially of Perez, because he's just continued to build upon that base, is the ability to capture and portray the emotions of the characters. They both had a great sense of drama and storytelling going for them, but that was coupled with an ability for fine portrayals of emotions, too. Something that's often referred to as the acting in comics. And that's something that you do quite well, and that seems really key to your work these days, as well.

Cho: Well, thank you. [Guess it comes from] drawing busty women and monkeys, you know? [Laughter] But George Perez, I really enjoyed his work when he inked himself. I know that he really didn't ink too much of his own work back then. Actually, Romeo Tanghal did a wonderful job of inking George Perez, but I've always enjoyed George Perez inking his own work. It was just a great time to read George Perez comics back then, because I thought that was his peak. Don't get me wrong, George Perez STILL does beautiful stuff. But his *Teen Titans* days were his prime era when he was firing on all cylinders. Also, John Byrne, too. John Byrne was absolutely just amazing then.

Sketch: You mentioned that it was when you saw Don Newton that you first thought that, maybe, this was something that you'd like to do for a living. However, you didn't pursue that so much as another career in college. Were you just trying to hedge your bets with the nursing training?

Cho: Well, I had a scholarship to go to Maryland Institute of Art. I had like a \$10,000 scholarship, but the school costs \$20,000, and at that time my older brother was also going to college, and my younger brother would be going into college right after me, like the year after. He was only a year behind. So, my parents just couldn't afford it, and I guess if I had really tried - got a job and all that at college - I could probably have survived with half a scholarship. But I went up to Maryland Institute of Art and looked around, and it just wasn't the environment that I wanted. I'm not a big fan of abstract art, and all this other artsy-fartsy stuff, so right away; I didn't want to go there. And, also, I saw the faculty stuff hanging on the wall, and I wasn't too impressed with it. They just focused too much on abstract b.s.

So I went to community college for three years. I've always enjoyed science, and been a big fan of biology, especially. And, coming from a typical Asian family, my parents actually put tremendous pressure



Early Frank Cho Illustration.

Frank Cho
-81-



on me to become a doctor. You know, if you come from an Asian family, they want you to become a doctor, an engineer, or a computer guy or something like that. And my parents saw that I really enjoyed biology a lot, [so they had been] telling me, really putting tremendous pressure on me from early on to become a doctor. So I opted to go into nursing school because it was shorter, it was a four year program instead of what - a seven year [program] for a doctor? And also, male to female ratio is like one to eight. So I was surrounded by women, and I look good in white. You can't beat that! [General laughter.]

Sketch: And I'm sure you had a few inspirations for your sketches there.

Cho: Oh, yeah! [More general laughter.]

So that's how I ended up in nursing school. Which wasn't too bad. I met a lot of great college friends while attending nursing school.

Sketch: Who all seemed to end up in your comic strip, didn't they?

Cho: Yeah, yeah. [General laughter.]

Sketch: Well, how did that all come about, and what are some of the early influences on your strip work?

Cho: When I went to University of Maryland, I did a strip called *University2*, which is basically the precursor to *Liberty Meadows*. A lot of the characters - Ralph, Dean, Leslie, Tony - all of those guys, a lot of their personalities were based on my college roommates. [General laughter]

That's how *University2* came to be. The reason why I started *University2* [is because] once you start drawing, you can't stop. And drawing a daily strip at Maryland was something to keep me sane, because I really hated nursing school. [More general laughter] I really loved the people in nursing school, but I really hated the classes. And I usually sat in the back row, drawing, and [getting] all these goofy ideas. So I decided to put that to good use. So, that's how it came to be.

Sketch: If I remember correctly, you have very few real influences when it comes to comic strips.

Cho: Yeah, it was basically, Berke Breathed's *Bloom County* that got me interested in comic strips. I was a huge fan of *Bloom County* growing up. And, before *Bloom County* came along, I really hated the newspaper strips. I never read any of the newspaper strips because they were god-awful bad, and boring. I mean, they were poorly drawn, and poorly written. And so I was never a big fan of newspaper comic strips until *Bloom County* came along. And *Bloom County*, for me, just shattered the status quo. Berke Breathed basically said, "Newspaper comic strips can be funny, and be somewhat well drawn." And so he really opened up my eyes to the newspaper comic strip. And through Berke Breathed, I discovered *Calvin and Hobbes* and *The Far Side*. *The Far Side* was mostly for the writing, [rather] than the art work — even though the artwork was very effective for his style of writing. And, of course, when I became a syndicated cartoonist, all three retired. [General laughter.]

Sketch: And it was all yours!

Cho: That's right.

So, early on I was a big comic book fan, and I had no desire to become a newspaper comic strip creator because, as I said earlier, after reading a comic book, and [then] trying to read a comic strip, it's like driving a sports car, and then trying to ride a tricycle. [General laughter] So I was never a big fan of newspaper stuff, but *Bloom County* was just absolutely wonderful; one of the funniest strips - it still is - one of the funniest strips that I've ever read. By his example, I started doing the college strips.

My style of writing is heavily influenced by his stuff, because Berke Breathed had that "beat" in his humor. He had this wonderful way of setting up the gag, and delivering the punchline. His humor had that right blend of topical, absurd rambunctiousness that really connected with me. Berke Breathed was a tremendous teacher to me.

Now *Calvin and Hobbes* was completely different. I enjoyed it from a pure graphic layout aspect. Plus the timeless quality of his writing. I believe Bill Watterson is one of the top 3 greatest newspaper cartoonists

of all time. Walt Kelly (*Pogo*) and Hal Foster (*Prince Valiant*) are the other two cartoonists. Bill Watterson blew the doors open to what newspaper comic strips were, could, and should be. His sense of layout design on his later Sunday strips was breathtaking. It really is too bad that he retired so early, because the newspaper comics page desperately need great artists like him to lead the way.

[Gary Larson's] *Far Side* on the other hand was something out of left field. Pure lunacy. Brilliant writing. God bless that nut.

Sketch: How did the syndication deal itself come about? Did you just package up the *University2* stuff and send that in to them?

Cho: Well, the whole syndication deal is a funny story. Again, I did not want to become a newspaper comic strip artist.

When I was a sophomore in college, I did a parody of Charlie Brown where Charlie Brown gets stuck in a kite eating tree, and one of my characters basically come down to help Charlie Brown from the tree. And he did so by chopping down the tree, and the tree landed on Charlie Brown. [General laughter] Just stupid, physical comedy gag. And several weeks later, I received a letter from a law firm that represented Charles Schulz saying that "Mr. Schulz is not happy with what you did," and that, if I continued, they're going to sue me. [More general laughter] And, you know, I was a sophomore in college. This scared the crap outta me. So, right there, Charles Schulz made me almost abandon my career as a cartoonist even before I started.

Anyway, later on, I submitted [a package to] the Scripps-Howard's annual journalists awards. And the cartoonists' category is open only to college cartoonists. So I submitted my *University2* strips to them, and out of the 157 college cartoonists nationwide, I was voted the best comic strip of 1994. And I won the Charles Schulz plaque for excellence in cartooning. [Loud general laughter.]

Sketch: "Take that, Sparky!"

Cho: Right. One of the great ironies of life.

And from there on, that kind of got the ball rolling about getting syndicated. United Media was also a big partner of the Scripps-Howard foundation, and one of the Senior Vice Presidents from United Media really liked my stuff, and said to submit to them. [He said I should] send them my strips and he'd try to get it syndicated, because he really thought that what I was doing was superb. So I basically put together other *University2* strips into a nice little packet, and sent it off to this Vice President. And he sent it along to the Director of the syndicate, who actually chooses the new strips. And I get this nice... well, I guess it's nice. I get this long letter from the Director saying

that my art's good, but my jokes and dialogues were too aggressive. They said that "it's not suitable for a family newspaper." It was like a two page letter, finding fault with my writing and my humor, more than anything else. And I think they said, basically, to try again.

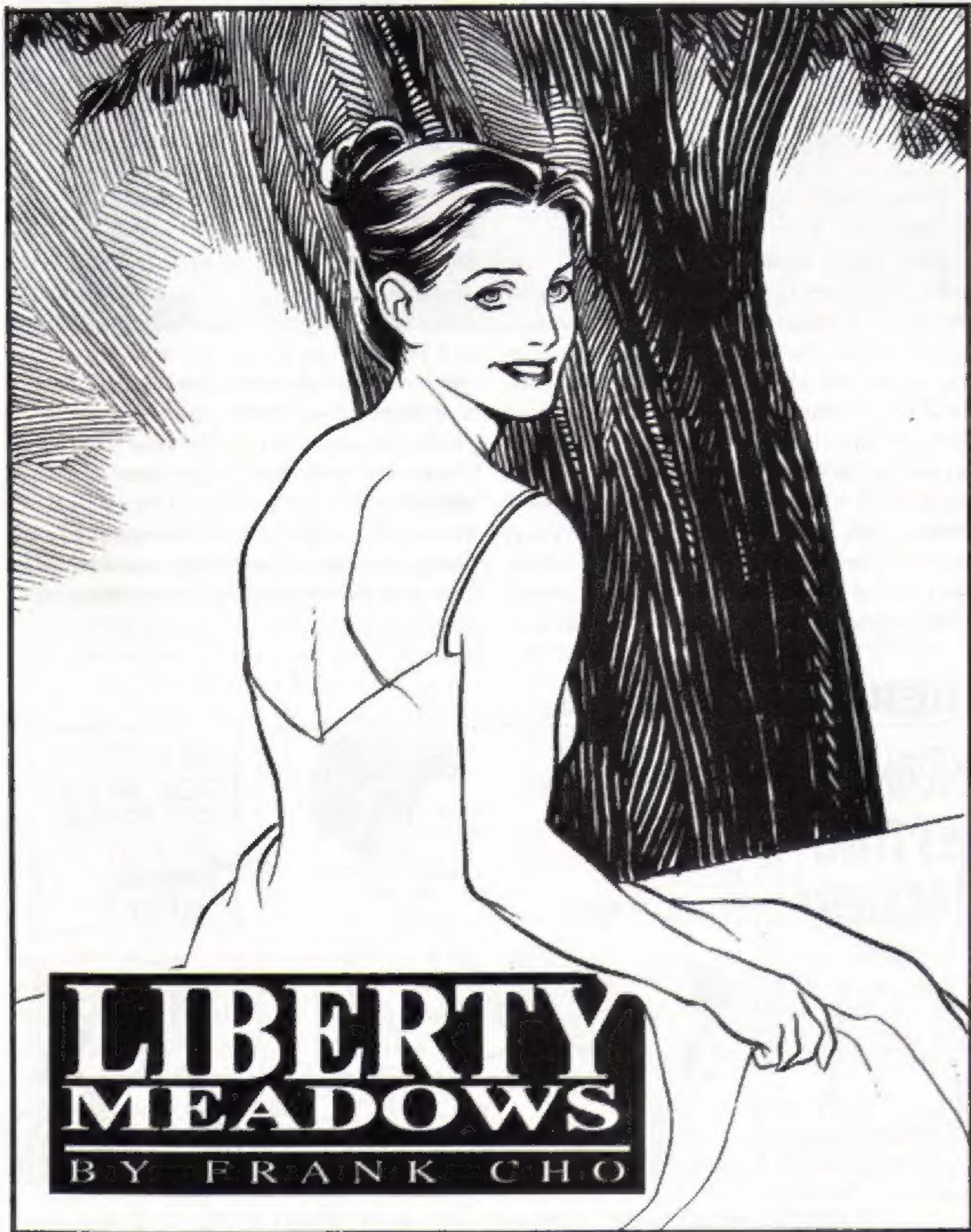
And I thought, "Well screw this!" So I just took that same packet and sent it off to the other seven syndicates. And I think pretty much all of them sent me a long rejection letter saying, "Your art's good, but your humor's too aggressive." [General laughter] My reaction was "Eh, who cares I guess it just didn't work out. I really wanted to work on comic book art, anyway." But then I received a phone call from Creator's Syndicate saying, "Don't sign with anyone. We're sending you a contract right away." And they promptly sent me an eleven page contract in a couple days. And that's how I got syndicated.

This all happened during my senior year in nursing school. So I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, and got working on doing *Liberty Meadows* right away. And that was five years ago.

Sketch: Which kind of brings us to the latest news concerning the strip. I do want to talk about your working methods on that, and your other work, but first thought we should talk about your recent decision to leave the syndicate deal and take *Liberty Meadows* into strictly comic book format. If you don't mind, why don't we talk about that for a few moments? What brought about your dissatisfaction, and what prompted you to leave the syndicate?

Cho: Mostly, it's creative freedom.

It's no secret; from the get-go, from day one, the syndicate has been watering down my strip. And, for the first two years, I let them get away with it. [I felt,] "You guys are my syndicate, you guys know what you are doing." But my newspaper sales were slow in growing, and it just got frustrating because they're constantly censoring everything; every single thing that I do. It got to the point where, to me anyway, it seemed like they wanted to change *Liberty Meadows* into *Family Circus*. And I just couldn't stand it. I would submit a comic strip and, when it's published, it's not what I wrote.



Sketch: So they were literally making changes to your strip without notifying you, or even giving you a chance to make those changes yourself?

Cho: Right, right. It depends on the editor. I've gone through six editors, and each editor is different, but they all have one thing in common: [a tendency] to censor and edit anything that's funny about my strip. [Laughter] It's just, after five years of this stuff, I'm not having fun. I mean it's to the point where I'm not happy at all. And the whole newspaper market, the whole [group of] features editors, they're so conservative, or they're so liberal that they're conservative. You know what I'm saying?

Sketch: Yeah.

Cho: A lot of the big city features editors have told my syndicate to tell me to tone my strip down. They automatically label me a sexist after taking one look at Brandy without reading a single strip. They say, "You're portraying women in a negative light," by just taking one look at Brandy. Of course, they don't read a strip. If they read the strip, they'd know that Brandy is the leader of the whole group. She's the hero and the problem solver.

Sketch: Yeah, she's very much in control of her own life.

Cho: Right, exactly!

Sketch: Well, until her mother shows up, but that's a whole 'nother story.

Cho: Right, right.

So, constantly being censored, and having the features editors tell you that you're sexist, they're not going to pick up the strip, and all these other factors just kind of accumulated over five years, just got [to be] too much. And I've been reprinting *Liberty Meadows* in comic book form for a while, and it's taking off like a rocket. Each issue is out selling the previous issue, while the newspaper sales have been kind of flat and stagnant. And in the comic book version I change everything back to

its original punch line and images, and add a bunch of new stuff to it. So the comic book version is what I originally envisioned, and the newspaper version is basically watered-down version. The "safe" version.

And another main reason that I decided to go the comic book route, aside from creative freedom and more control, is my wife and I are expecting our first child this December. And you know how much time and energy it takes to raise a child when they're a baby, and the newspaper schedule isn't flexible. It's a daily deadline. The newspaper schedule will not allow me to take breaks, and stuff like that. So that was another huge factor.

But, overall, it's just one of those things. Over five years of constant harassment and catering to the whims of humorless editors. You know, enough is enough.

Sketch: It must have had a real impact on your creative abilities, too. Did it lead you to start second guessing yourself, or having bouts of self-doubt?

Cho: Oh yeah. It was absolutely horrible! I know when I was doing *University2*, my college strip, what I thought was funny, I would just do it. Boom, it was on paper. But when I'm doing *Liberty Meadows*, I'll think of something funny, and then I second-guess myself. I say, "Aw, wait a minute, I might offend somebody," and kind of pull back. And then I say, "Aw, screw them! I'm going to go ahead and put it on paper." And then I'll pull back and think, "Naw, I don't want to lose another newspaper. I don't want to offend some features editor and have her drop my strip." I'm constantly second guessing myself, and it's just driving me up the wall. After five years, my confidence level in my humor has gone down each year, and it's just tremendously taxing on your mind and body when you don't know what to do. It's almost to the point where I'm not writing for myself anymore; I'm writing for the politically correct minority, you know? So that was another reason for my decision to leave.

I really don't understand some of these cartoonists who have managed to stay doing a comic strip year after year, [repeating] the same ten gags over and over, for decades. [Laughter] Newspapers' comic page, it seems, is the only medium that rewards mediocrity and unoriginality. It really is disturbing. Don't these cartoonists take pride in their work? How can they rehash the same unfunny tired gags decade after decade? I really don't know how they do it. I guess money is everything to them. After the first two years of going through the b.s. newspaper politics I was climbing the walls, and this year I wanted to eat a gun.

Sketch: Well, it's much better to gain your freedom than resort to that kind of out, or to try to continue working under that kind of cloud.

Cho: Right.

Sketch: How's the collection (*Liberty Meadows: Big Book of Love*) doing for you these days?

Cho: It's doing good. Actually, it did pretty damn good for a \$30 book.

Sketch: Have you sold out of the first printing yet?

Cho: No, actually, we're getting close, though. I think by the end of the year we're going to sell out.

Sketch: Can you give us a ballpark figure as to the print run total on that?

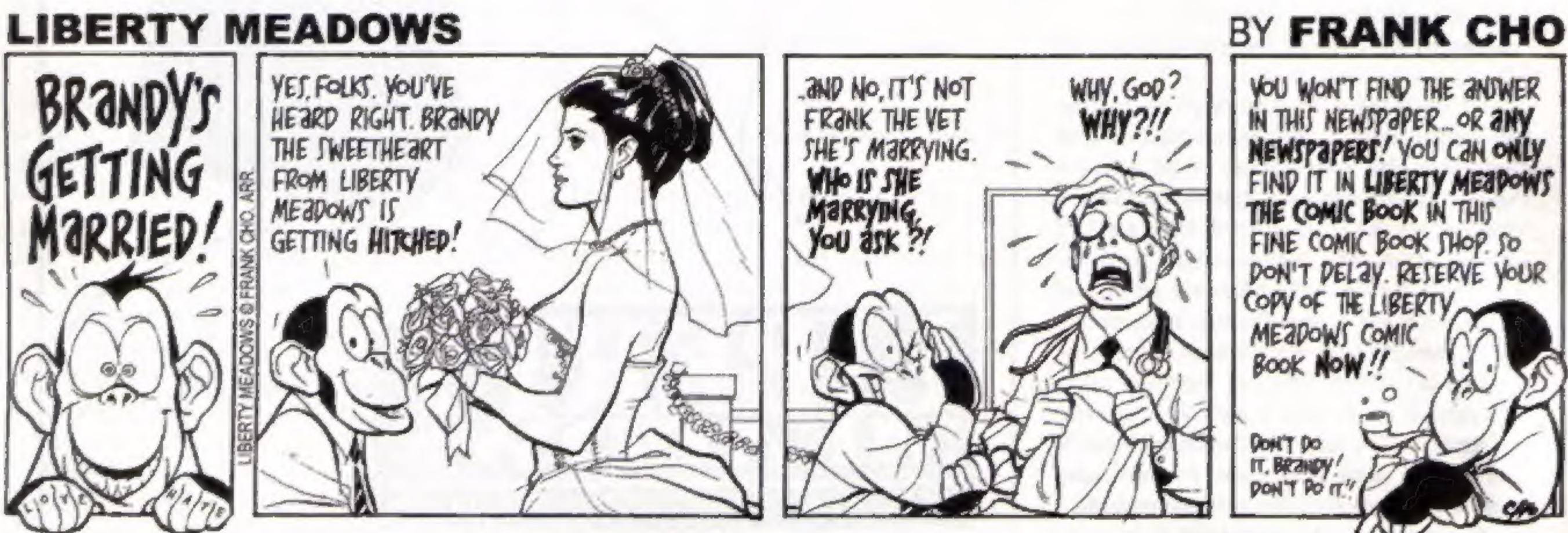
Cho: I think it's around the same number, print-wise, as the *Frank Cho: Illustrator* [hard cover run]. I think it was over 8,000. Something like that.

Sketch: OK. And that's just available through comic shops right now, correct?

Cho: Right.

Sketch: It's going to be real interesting to see what happens, as far as sales, when that puppy finally hits the general book stores and chains.

BY FRANK CHO



THE LIBERTY MEADOWS WEDDING ALBUM

THE COMIC BOOK WITH ALL THE ANSWERS!

Cho: Right, right. The stores around here, the stores where my comic strip is running, it's been selling out. The other stores [where] the newspapers aren't carrying it, I thought it wouldn't do well, but they're doing much better than I expected. The sales are very brisk. So I'm actually very happy with how the collection book is doing [sales-wise], because I was worried that the price tag was too high. But the fans, I guess, proved me wrong. [General laughter.]

Sketch: Well, you've got an interesting and a pretty clever gimmick coming up to help Liberty Meadows shift from the newspapers to comics-only format. How'd you come up with this idea, and the whole campaign behind it? I think it's a pretty fun and exciting idea, actually.

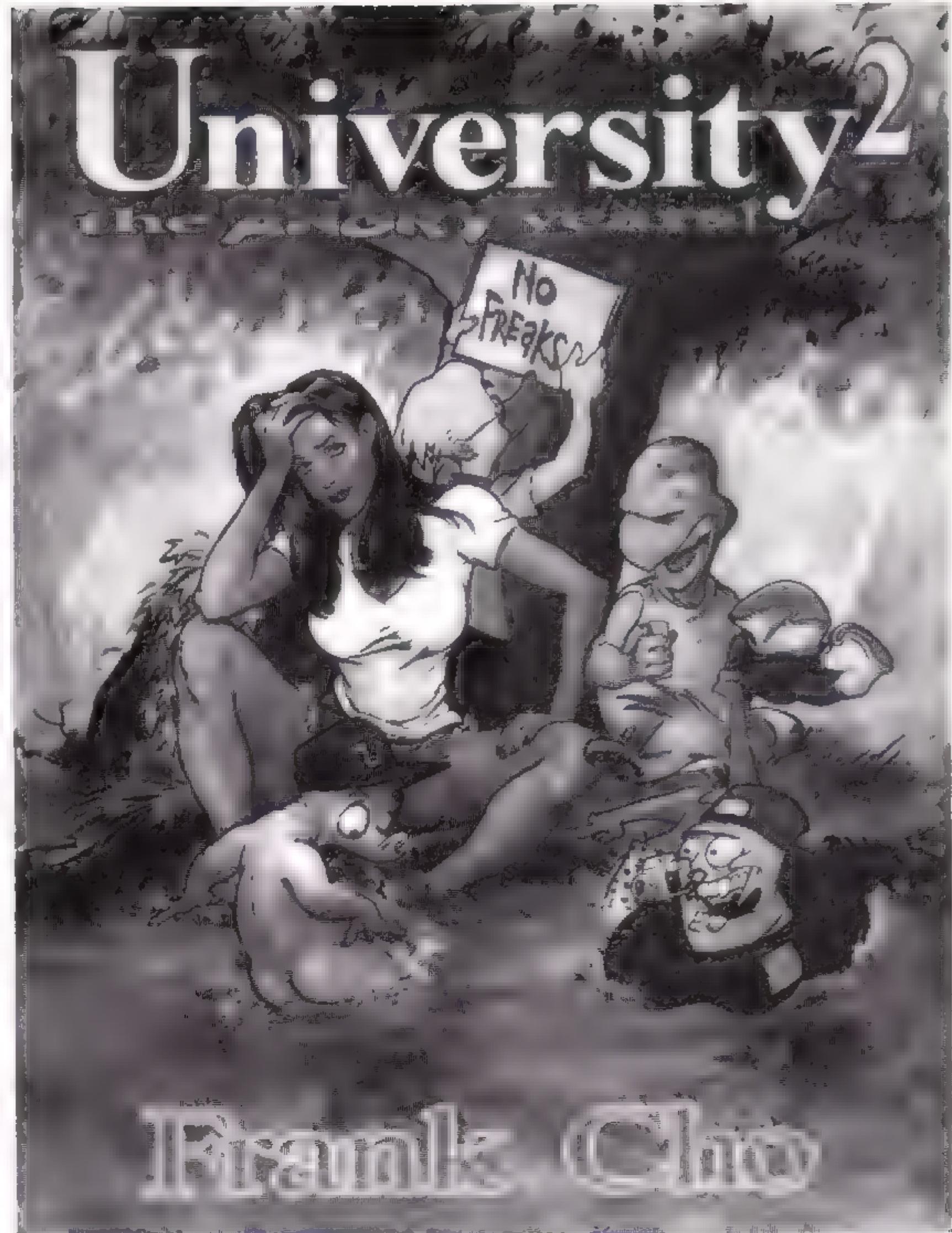
Cho: You mean ending it with a cliffhanger?

Sketch: Yeah.

Cho: I've always wanted to do one of those things. Actually, I did it in my college newspaper. I ended *University2* in the student newspaper with a cliffhanger, and then answered the cliffhanger in the collection book *University2: The Angry Years*. [Laughter] You know, I'm doing the same thing again, but with a wider audience. I like to think of it as a season finale, where everything is kind of up in the air, and then to answer it in the comic book form. [General laughter] What I want to do is; by ending it with the cliffhanger, I want to draw as much of my audience as possible into the comic stores. And I'm just hoping that it will still pay off.

Pretty much towards the end of the strip's run in December, we're going to provide all of the information on how to locate a comic book shop [by using] the Comic Book Locator number. I'm going to try to include all of that information leading up to the cliff hanger, so people will have plenty of time to seek out their local comic book shops. And we're taking out a huge add in all of the major papers on [how and] where to locate a comic book shop, and [the fact that,] if they want to know what happened, if they want the answer to the cliff hanger, you must go to the comic book shop and pick up a copy of *Liberty Meadows Wedding Album* special. Mark Wheatley and a bunch of the retailers are doing a tremendous job of advertising it.

I really should thank Mark Wheatley here. Mark Wheatley has been a tremendous help in forging my career. Actually it was Mark Wheatley's idea to put *Liberty Meadows* into a comic book form [in the first place], because my syndicate and Andrews and McMeel were in negotiations to put out *Liberty Meadows* in a collection book. [Laughter] Andrews and McMeel were basically on the fence. They basically left me hanging for a couple of years. They said, "We're not saying 'No', and we're not saying 'Yes'; we're just waiting to see what



happens with your strip." Because, from what little bits of information I gathered, all of the younger executives, the young coworkers or whatever, at Andrews and McMeel really loved my stuff, but the head honchos, the older crowd, they didn't know what to make of it. And so they said that, "The number of newspapers he's in is still kind of low for us, so we'll wait to see if he develops more of an audience." And, of course, this is complete b.s., [because at the same time] I'm getting hundreds of letters a week from fans asking, "When are you going to have a collection book out?"

And for about a year I was bitching and moaning to Mark, "Do you believe damn Andrews and McMeel, sitting on this thing? And my damn syndicate isn't pushing it aggressively enough to get a book out!" And Mark said, "Well, why don't you just put it in a comic book form, so it will be somewhat of a collection format, and it won't jeopardize the book collection deal with Andrews and McMeel, because it's a separate market?" I'm like, "Oh. That's a great idea." So we got permission from my syndicate, and the comic book just took off. We're selling over 17,000 copies per issue, and with the reprints, it's in the 20s.

So it's been doing great!

Sketch: Those are really good numbers, particularly for a black and white reprint book in today's market. Well, why don't we talk about your approach to creating *Liberty Meadows* and your other work? Do you start by brainstorming?

Cho: Kinda. When I was doing the college strip, *University2*, I would start with a punch line first and write backwards. I would start with any words or phrases that would get me rolling, and my roommates were a tremendous help. Basically, some of the dialogue I just ripped off from my roommates. We're just sitting around talking, you know, [when something struck me as funny] and I'd just transfer that into the strip. So the college strip, I would just start with the punch line first, and then go back and try to think of a set-up. So the college strips, most of them were just punch line driven — you know, set-up, pause, punch line, boom.

When I went to do *Liberty Meadows*, that changed quickly. [Laughter] Because the punch lines I thought were funny — are funny — but they're offensive. According to my editors. [General laughter] It's pretty



funny, because almost every editor I got, I always have this same conversation:

They'd call me up and say, "We've got to change the punch line."

And I'd say, "Why?"

And they'd say, "It's not appropriate for a family newspaper."

And I'd go, "It's funny though, right?"

And they'd say, "We have to change it, Frank!"

"It's funny, right?"

And they'd say, "Yeah, it's funny. But we can't use it!" [General laughter.]

And I would have the same argument [with each new editor], and then, eventually, they'll basically stop calling and just change it without my knowledge. [More general laughter.]

With *Liberty Meadows* it was kind of tricky, because I had to change the way I wrote. So, with *Liberty Meadows* I'm actually going into more [extended] story line type stuff, almost a soap opera type of story, which actually turned out better than I expected. [Laughter] You know, I'm not too confident about my writing abilities but, so far, reading back to back issues of *Liberty Meadows*, I think I did an OK job of maintaining a story line with enough humor to keep it going.

Sketch: Yeah, because that's one of the things that I was going to bring up, that you've moved from the idea of doing essentially self-contained daily strips with the University2 strips to something that's closer to an action-adventure strip featuring extended arcs with *Liberty Meadows*. I mean there are interesting things, and quite funny things, in each daily episode, and the Sundays are almost complete unto themselves, but there is that sense of continuation in the newer work. So, how do you create the strips themselves? Do you write out an idea for an arc, and

then start breaking it down into the dailies?

Cho: Well, a little bit. Most of it is just deadline panic. [General laughter] But I wrote the ending to *Liberty Meadows* before it was launched. I knew exactly how it was going to end, but I was hoping that was like 15 years down the road. But it's not. I'm actually using a lot of the outlined ideas that I planned from the beginning into this upcoming story arc, the cliffhanger. Yeah, it's kind of interesting writing this whole story arc.

I have a very loose outline in my head. It's almost like weekly storytelling. Each week, with this outline in my head, I make up my mind what to talk about in this week's [series of] strips. Just kind of plant that seed in this week that will eventually pay off a month from now. You know what I'm saying? So, writing-wise, I kind of have a weekly session, a weekly episode, that I want to tell [leading up] to the big payoff at the end

Sketch: And then you just kind of follow your gut on a daily basis, then.

Cho: Right, right. So, for every week's worth of strip that I do, at least one or two is from the outline, an idea from the outline. And the rest is, I'm basically winging it. [General laughter] With a wing and a prayer, I guess. And, so far, it's been pretty good, you know? The fans seem to enjoy it.

And, since I'm just making it from the seat of my pants - if that's the correct phrase, I'm not from around here [General laughter] - a lot of the stuff I write in is very topical, so I have that edge over other cartoonists.

Sketch: How do you create the actual art for the strip? Do you begin by doing thumbnails first?

Cho: I tried to do that, with a rough outline, and thumbnails and all that stuff, but because of the deadline pressure I just go ahead and thumbnail it onto the final Bristol board from the start. I draw stick figures, very light stick figures, on the Bristol board.

Let me just go back and tell you exactly what I use. On an 18" by 8" sheet of paper, Bristol board three-ply Strathmore, I rule out the borders so the actual live area - that's where the actual image is going to be - is 4 3/4" by 16". This is the daily strip. And I break it down into four even panels, and from there, that's where I start. I lightly sketch in the idea, using stick figures mostly, and I write the dialogue on the margins around the live area. Just kind of play around with words, see what the idea is going to be. And then once I nail down the idea, what I want, then I go ahead and start to flesh out the drawing. I would pencil in the drawing and the images I want loosely, and tighten up with each pass. Layout-wise, there's no preplanning at all; I just do it right there on the spot. And then I write in

the dialogue, and ink in the dialogue. And then I ink in the final drawing, and ink in the borders, and then erase the pencil marks, and that's my strip.

So there's no real planning ahead when I do strips; it's, again, right on the spot. I got to a point where this works for me now. For the first year, I actually did a lot of preplanning stuff. A lot of thumbnail images, and stuff like that. But it just became too time consuming. And I also, I don't know what other artist's think, I actually enjoy drawing it without thumbnails most of the time because it has, the final images, have more energy to them. They have a more spontaneous feel to them.

Sketch: Helps to keep it all fresh.

Cho: Right.

Also, a lot of my strip, almost half of my strip is repeated images. And those are quite easy to do. Again I set up the Bristol board, divide it in four panels, and on a typewriting sheet of paper - just a regular, 8 1/2" by 11" piece of paper - I draw a nice, tight image of the character talking. And then, using a light table, I basically recopy the image on to the Bristol board, but not ink it. And then I go back and change the expression, change the mouth movement, to reflect the dialogue, and ink it. In today's strips, that's what a lot of comic strips are, is nothing but talking heads. So that's how I do that type of strip, if it's just straight dialogue, and I'll use the light table and draw it on a separate sheet of paper.

The stuff that I really like to do is the Sunday strip. [Laughter] Because the Sunday strip is a big sheet of paper, and I get to play around with it. [I start with] a 27" by 12 1/2" sheet of paper. The actual live image is 8 1/2" by 24 1/2" inches. So that's kind of a long, rectangular type of strip. But still, that's plenty of room for me to draw. And on the Sunday strips, I do a lot more preplanning because it's more open space to play around with the graphics, how to lay it out, how to make the words flow.

So, [when it comes to] Sunday, I do a lot more thinking on the strip before I touch the paper. I usually do a thumbnail on the margin of the Sunday pages. It's just like a really quick and loose sketch thumbnail of where all the images are going to be. This is where I also do 90% of the actual, finished writing because I have an idea in my head, and when I'm doing the thumbnails for the Sundays, I basically start writing, writing the actual dialogue, on the margins. And then I take these thumbnails and I basically divide up the dialogue into panels. And then once I divide up the dialogue into panels, I figure out the number of panels needed on that Sunday page. So that's when I actually start laying it out, when I get the dialogue done.

The step here, it's not a real layout; panel breakdown is more like it. Once I have the final panel breakdown I start playing

around with which panel should be bigger, which images should be emphasized, should be popping out of the panel, and that type of stuff.

Sketch: Right. Because you don't seem to use repeated images in those Sunday strips.

Cho: Right, right. The Sunday strip is my play day. I really take that opportunity to draw.

So. That's how I do my Sunday strips. Again, Sunday strips are tougher than daily strips, I found out. Because with the daily strip you have a continuing story line, so the set-up can be from the previous day. But with Sunday, it has to be a self-contained story from beginning, middle, to the end. And so you're writing a short story for any Sunday strip that you do. And it's really, really tough. I'm working on one right now, and I have a couple ideas. Usually before I start a Sunday strip I have a couple ideas, and I play around with it until I develop the one that I like the best, then I work on the Sunday strip. But there are times where I just can not come up with a Sunday idea, a self-contained gag, and those are the times I usually fall back on breaking in my new pen joke. [General laughter] Where it's nothing but a big panel, a big illustration, basically. And, actually, depending on the day, I really like doing those illustration strips more than the actual gag Sunday strips, because I can only do so much cartoony stuff before I go crazy. Those "Breaking in new pens" Sunday strips provide me a little break, a little vacation, if you will, from the daily cartoony grind work.

Sketch: Do you hand color your Sundays, or do you just indicate what the different colors should be?

Cho: Oh, I just indicate what the colors should be.

I recently changed how I do that. Because, in the past, I used to photocopy the Sunday strip, and on the photocopy I would roughly color in the images with colored pencils, and then label the color. I had this big color chart that the American Colors Company [provides] - American Colors is the company that colors pretty much all the Sunday comic strips that you see in newspapers. So the all the papers send in their Sunday strips there, and American Colors do the coloring. So, anyway, I would color in the Sunday photocopy, label the numbers according to the color chart, and send the color guide and the original to my syndicate. I used to do that, until recently, about six months ago. I just got a big scanner. I will scan in the Sundays into the computer, and actually color it on the computer using PhotoShop. It's not the greatest coloring job. [Laughter] Again, basically, I'm doing the same thing. I just drop in the colors that I want, roughly,

in PhotoShop, and I send the high resolution (800 dpi) black and white Sunday off to American Colors by email, and I also send in a very low resolution (72 dpi) color guide with it, over email. So they use the color guide to help them basically drop in the colors that are needed. They do a lot better coloring job than I can. [General laughter.]

Sketch: So you're using basic solid colors on the guide, without any fades or other effects?

Cho: No, no. Actually, that's the only drawback since I switched over to computer, because when I was doing it with colored pencil I used to get more tricky with my coloring. Because I used to indicate [for instance] "fade here," with a colored pencil having a nice fading effect and write in the words, with the arrow pointing, "fade here", and all this other stuff. "I need a highlight here," "I need a glow effect here." But when I'm using PhotoShop, I don't know how to do any of that. [General laughter] I just have solid colors.

Sketch: So in one sense you've technically taken a big step forward, but you've simultaneously moved a step backward in another sense.

Cho: Exactly

Sketch: About how long does it take to create each kind of strip?

Cho: The daily strip, again, the longest part is coming up with the idea. That's the hardest part. Actually, I can come up with million gags. But coming up with something that is actually funny - that's the key. [General laughter] Because I have tons of ideas that are absolutely...I mean they're ideas, but they're not that funny. So coming up with an idea that I'm OK with, that I'm proud of, [that I want] to see printed, that's the longest part. But once I have the idea, it

takes me to do one daily strip roughly about three hours. So I can do about two or three strips a day, if I have the idea. But that usually isn't the case. [General laughter.]

Sunday strips, a Sunday strip, if you think about it, is about two or three strips in one. So it takes me all day. It takes me about six to eight hours. And that's not including the computer work, the scanning and the coloring it in PhotoShop. So, Sunday strips take me a long time. And also, Sunday strips are, again, harder for me to do, because I have to come up with a self-contained story.

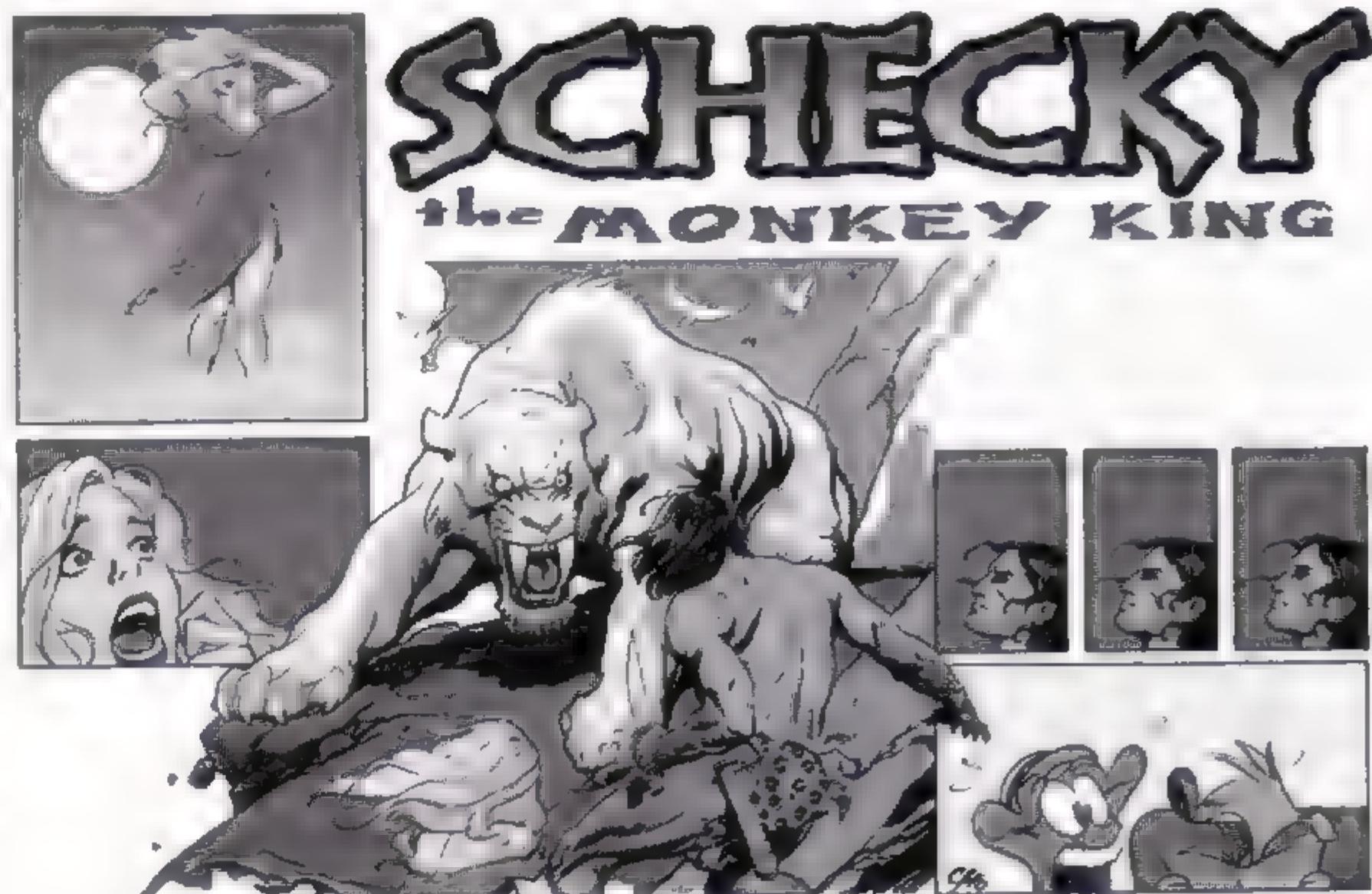
Sketch: It almost sounds like you end up working about eight hours a day, seven days a week.

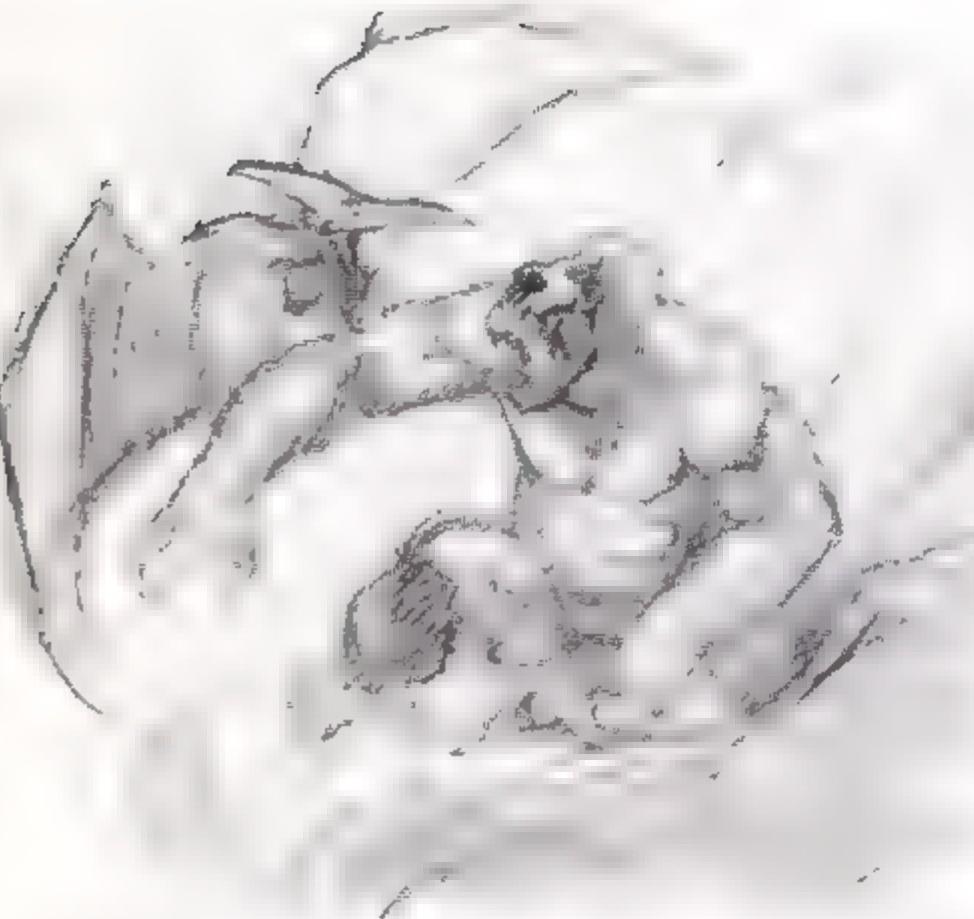
Cho: Not every day. I have a nasty habit of waiting until the deadline. [General laughter] So, like two or three days before deadline, I will basically burn the candle at both ends. And, usually the day before the deadline, I would not go to sleep. I would stay up all night, just drawing the strip. By then, after I send in these strips, I just basically crash for about two days. And then it's repeat the process all over again.

Sketch: Wake up and do it all again.

Cho: Right. It drives my wife crazy, because most of the time when she goes to bed, I'm still in the basement just drawing away. And, also, I'm a night owl. I do all my drawing after 11 o'clock at night, and I usually go to bed around 4 in the morning. So my wife isn't too happy about that [habit]. She's actually happy that I'm going the comic book route, instead of the newspaper route, because I'll have more regular hours.

Sketch: Yeah, and with the young one on the way, that's likely to force some changes, too. I mean, you'll be up late at night, but for different reasons. [General laughter]





Cho: Right, right

Every night after I have dinner with my wife, and watch some TV, I head downstairs and basically just sit around and stare at that blank sheet of paper for about an hour. And after 11 o'clock, I start kind of scribbling, just jotting down ideas, dialogue. I'll play around with dialogue, mostly. And then, once I hit upon the dialogue I like, I start drawing.

Sketch: We talked about the basic paper you use. What kind of tools - pencils, pens, brushes, etc. do you typically use?

Cho: I don't use any brush. Everything I do is pen. The pencil that I use is just a regular mechanical pencil, a #2 mechanical pencil. I'm not sure what kind of lead it is in it; all I know is that it's a .7 millimeter lead, and I'm not sure what the hardness or softness is.

And for inking I use Micron Pigma pens, [using] 08 for pretty much most of the drawing I actually use two of them: 08 and 02; 02 I usually use for a lot of the

finer detail stuff, like the face and the eyes. But 08 I use basically for the body outlines and everything else. The amazing thing about the Micron pen is it actually took me a long time to find a pen that works this well - is that the Micron can actually mimic a brush stroke very well, in my opinion. When I ink I have several pieces of paper underneath the bristle, so it has a certain cushion. So, when I press down on the Micron pen, it produces a thick line, and if I let up, it produces a thin line, almost like a brush. Actually, exactly like a brush. So, depending on the pressure I put on to the pen, the thickness and the thinness of the line [varies]. So a lot of people mistakenly think that I use a brush, but actually it's all pen. It's just practice. You know, "Practice makes perfect" So it's just a Micron pen.

Sketch: So you use that for your large areas of blacks as well, then?

Cho: No, no. For the large black areas I use regular India ink. I used to use Speedball "Super Dense" Black ink, but they stopped making it. Which is frustrating, because that Super Dense Black ink by Speedball used to produce the most opaque black that I've ever seen. Once you cover it up, it stays black. It doesn't have a grading, a gray effect, when it dries like the other India ink does. Of course they stopped making it. [General laughter] So now I use the regular India ink, and I go over it several times to attain that nice, solid black. And that is just with a regular brush. I'm not sure what brush it is; I think it's just like a regular watercolor brush.

Sketch: Oh, OK. So it's just for those large black areas that you use a brush?

Cho: Right.

Sketch: What about tooth on the paper? Do you like a lot of it, or just a bit?

Cho: I like a little bit. It's weird, because I use Strathmore two ply 100 pound Bristol board and they stopped making that paper, too, I think. Or I'm just having a tough time finding it. It's 300 series Strathmore Bristol vellum surface - I think that means regular surface - and it has a very fine tooth to it. It's not very rough, but it's not smooth plate. It's somewhere in between, and that's the paper that I like to use.

You know, I've done some work with DC Comics, and they would send me their paper. They would ask me, "Do you want rough or smooth paper?" and I told them, "Send them both" And the rough paper's just too rough; it's like drawing on sandpaper. And the smooth paper they sent me is too smooth. You know what I'm saying?

Sketch: Right, it's almost like it's so smooth that the ink won't stick to it.

Cho: Yeah, it's almost like a wax paper. So I usually end up going out and buying my own paper, the Bristol board. Which

I'm having a great deal of trouble finding. Because I used to go up to the Maryland University Student Book Store, and they used to carry a big stack of it. And just one day they just stopped carrying it, and the lady [who stocks that section] said they stopped making it. And I've been searching all around, and I'm having trouble finding it, so I'm getting scared. [General laughter] But a friend of mine just found me a big batch of it, so I'm happy for the time being. I'm going to try to locate a number and call the company up directly, and see if they stopped making that paper or not.

Sketch: And beg them to bring it back if they have, right?

Cho: Right. So it's kind of weird. It seems every time that I find the tools that I want, that I use, that I depend on, they stop making it. Speedball. Strathmore. Who knows, maybe they'll stop making Microns. [General laughter]

Sketch: Don't give them any ideas, Frank!

Cho: Lord knows, I buy like, boxes of them at a time.

Sketch: How do you approach creating covers and pin-ups? Does it require a different approach for you than, say, creating the Sundays?

Cho: Pin-ups and covers; it's more photo reference. Over the years, I've built up a nice photo reference file and, actually, it's almost like body parts [General laughter] It's like Doctor Frankenstein body parts. I have folders on arms, folders on legs, folders on heads, folders on backs, on and on. Hands. Feet. So when I do a large pin-up or cover, I use these photo files.

What I do is, Step one: I thumbnail it on a small sheet of paper, 8 1/2" by 11" typewriter paper. I basically scribbling. I start scribbling a bunch of these very small figures just like jumping, [or doing] whatever pin up idea that I have in mind. And then once I come across the pose I like, I go ahead and draw it onto the Bristol board directly without any reference. Just straight out of my head. Then I go back and use my file to correct any mistakes, [and] basically really tightening it up. You know, if the hand is a little off, I'll find a picture of a hand that is very similar. Usually with the hand, I have tough time. So usually, for hands, I use a mirror [recreating the exact pose] to hold things, and stuff like that. But for feet, legs, stuff like that, I go to my reference file and find that one body part at that certain angle that I'll use as a reference.

The big key thing is not to rely too heavily on the photo reference, which a lot of people are doing. You know what I'm saying?

Sketch: Yeah, I think so. The image can become too rigid, and you lose a lot of its

vitality and spontaneity, if you become too intent on recreating a reality.

Cho: Right, right.

So, I sketch everything out first, and then use the photo file to tighten it up, and ink it, etc. For the daily comic strip, for my *Liberty Meadows* [work], I really don't use any photo reference file, if at all, because they're basically talking heads. And, also, there are no photo files for monkeys [General laughter] So all the King Kong, and all the big giant apes, that type of stuff, that's straight out of my head. It wasn't referenced at all. I think I should reference some of them, but I haven't.

So that's how I do covers and pin ups.

Sketch: Do you use the light box to transfer the initial sketched image from the typewriter paper onto the boards?

Cho: No, no.

Sketch: You redraw it then?

Cho: Yeah, I just redraw it. I don't trace it. So the thumbnails are just for the rough body movement.

Actually, I know what you're talking about, because some people; I've seen them work and they would actually draw it on a separate sheet of paper and then really tighten it up, and then go to a Xerox machine to blow it up, and then use a light box to retrace it. I don't have easy access to a Xerox machine. I have to go out and drive about ten minutes, ten-fifteen minutes out of my way, to get access to a photocopying machine. And so it's just too much of a hassle. And, also, I like drawing it from scratch again, because it has a certain life to it.

Sketch: And as far as finishing it, it's pretty similar to your inking techniques on the strips?

Cho: Actually, for the daily and the Sundays I try to simplify things, because the newspaper version is only about 35 to 40% of the original [size]. So a lot of the details are lost. So over the years I've kind of consciously tried to keep the lines simple and direct.

For the pin ups and covers, I guess I do a little more fancy stuff, a little more fancier finish to it. But, essentially, they're all the same [techniques].

Sketch: You also paint, correct?

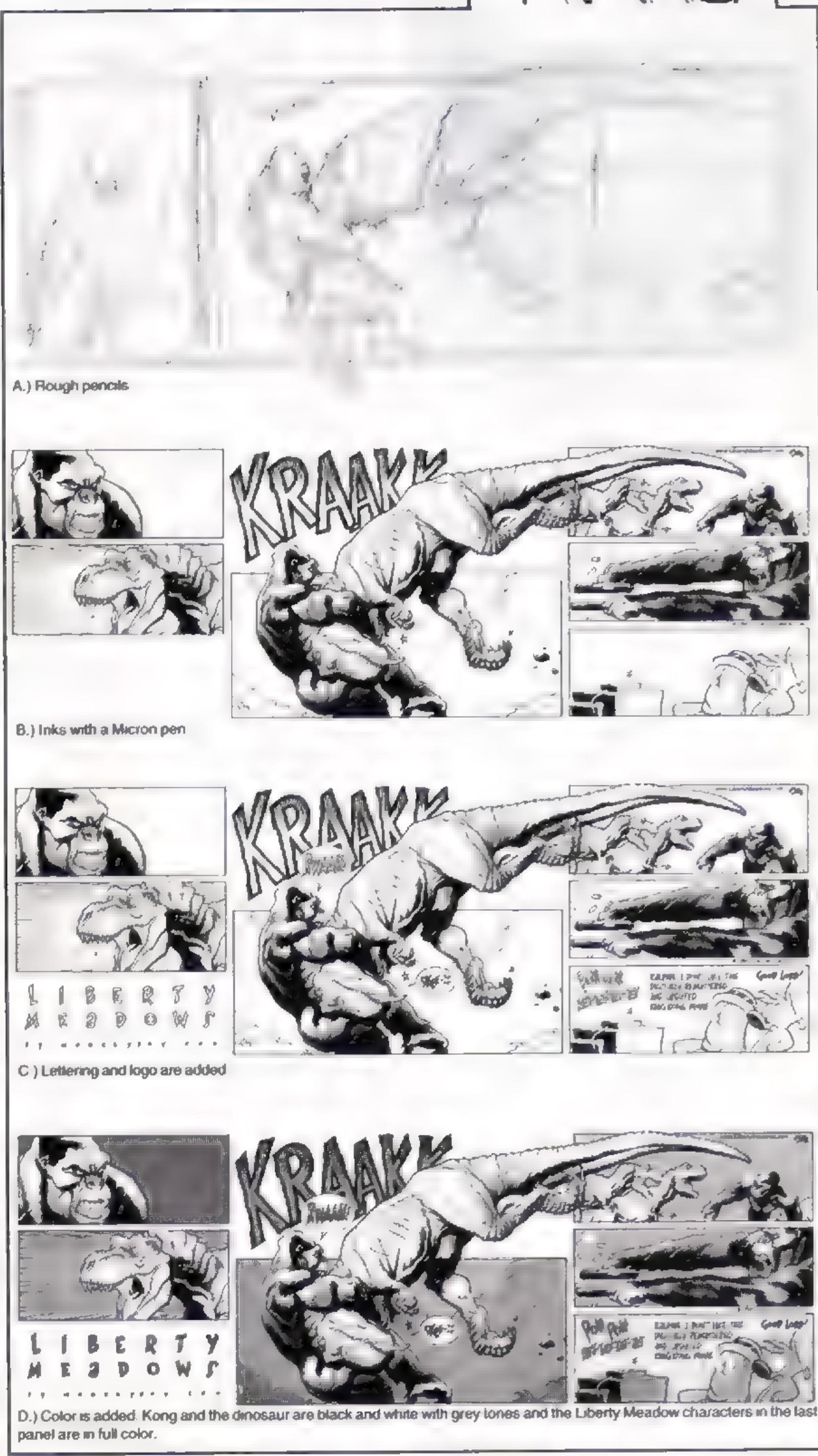
Cho: Yes.

Sketch: What's your approach to that process? Do you basically create a finished sketch, and then paint over that image?

Cho: If only it was that simple. [General laughter] I have no idea what I'm doing when I'm painting. It's all guesswork. Again, no one has taught me how to paint, so I'm struggling to find out how to paint. I read a lot of the how-to books, and they're no help.

When I do an oil painting - which I really

DESIGNING A LIBERTY MEADOWS SUNDAY NEWSPAPER STRIP





want to get back into - I thumbnail on a separate sheet of paper, I just draw out the image. And, once I pick out the image I like, I basically redraw it with pencil. I'm not sure if you're supposed to do that or not, but I basically treat the canvas as a Bristol board, and redraw the image. Even with the erasing, and the whole nine yards. [General laughter] So, by the time I'm finished redrawing it on the canvas, it's a mess. It's a big, splotchy mess. And then I start painting.

I paint the background first. [Well,] I not even paint the background - just block out the colors. And then I start painting. Of course, me being an idiot [when it comes to this,] I apply the paint too thickly, so all the pencil images disappear once I block out the backgrounds. So, I basically start from scratch again. I just go ahead and paint the whole thing over, and look to the thumbnail and try to pick out the details. So, with oil painting, it's just hit or miss for me. I really don't know how to paint. I don't think I'll ever learn how to paint.

Also, it's a very spontaneous technique. I really like the 'wet on wet' look, so I just start slapping paint around. And, again, it's just the effect that I want to get [that I'm trying to create, but] I'll be lucky to get it 25% of the time. So far I've been lucky with some the paintings that I've done, [they've] turned out better than I thought they would.

The painters that I really like are those 'wet on wet' painters. I think the greatest painter who ever lived was Diego Velazquez. And I also love John Singer Sargent, who was a big Velazquez fan. I'm just blown away by Sargent's technique, how he just basically draws with his paint. He just nails it; it's almost impressionistic. So I usually have John Singer Sargent in mind when I'm painting, I want to get that same effect. And, of course, I fail each and

every time. [General laughter.]

Sketch: Yeah, what you're talking about, the way he's almost drawing, is even more apparent when you get to see the paintings themselves. It's often hinted at in good reproductions, depending how good they are, but his brush strokes, and the way he builds things up is just amazing.

Cho: Right. Just stunning.

You know, when I was younger, I tried painting like Frazetta, and Frazetta has a very unique approach to painting. He doesn't treat oil paint as oil paint - he treats it like watercolor. He dilutes it a lot, to where it's almost like watercolor. And he's almost dyeing instead of painting. Which I tried, but there's only one Frazetta.

Also, I just didn't like the effect. I like very bold painters. Like N.C. Wyeth. N.C. Wyeth is also a very heavy-handed painter, who would just, like, draw as he paints. He's another great illustrator.

Sketch: Are there any particular brushes, or oils, that you like to use, or are you still kind of playing around with it and discovering what you like?

Cho: I'm still playing around with it. I found out I like linseed oil, because if I wanted to thin out the paint, to make it a thinner consistency, I'd go ahead and directly use turpentine. Which I read somewhere you're not supposed to do. If you want to thin out the paint, you should use linseed oil. So I've been using that, and I've actually been having somewhat decent success with that, with [getting] the images I want. Because if you dilute turpentine, you lose that vitality in oil's colors because it's diluted, and becomes dull. But with linseed oil, it maintains that sparkle. It actually maintains and adds to that sparkle, even more so.

Unfortunately, it's very bad for reproduction. [General laughter] [That's] because it's very highly reflective, so it gets this glare if you photograph it, or even if you scan it. So I'm kind of torn, you know? Because should I just keep using linseed oil, and maintain that bright color that I want, or dilute it with turpentine, so you have that dullness that will produce well when it's photographed or scanned.

Brush-wise, I'm just kind of buying new brushes almost every month, because again; I have no idea what I'm doing.

Sketch: So about how long does it generally take to do a painting?

Cho: The fastest painting I've ever done was about four hours, which was that Frankenstein painting that I did in the *Frank Cho: Illustrator* book. And that one, I was

just in one of those moods where I just wanted to paint. I was just, like, slapping on paint. But I've noticed that what I do, most of the time when I paint, is I pretty much paint like 80% of it in the first sitting. And then, over [a period of] a couple weeks,

I keep going back to it to tighten up the details or redo something. Because once it dries, it looks a little different than when it's wet. So I'm constantly changing things, modifying things.

Sketch: What about a typical cover or pin up, how long do those take?

Cho: Just a regular cover, a black and white cover for a comic book, or pin-up, it just takes me - the actual execution or whatever - takes me a day. It actually takes longer, because I have to get the approval from the art director. But the actual sitting down and drawing it and inking it takes me one day. It's almost like a Sunday strip, because I also usually provide the color guide with it, too. This time with the colored pencils on a photocopy.

Sketch: Is there any particular brand or style of color pencils you've grown fond of using?

Cho: Not really. [Laughter] I just grab what's lying around. I guess maybe I should pay more attention to it, but no. Again, with oil painting, whatever is the cheapest kind to get. [General laughter] Same with watercolor and gouache, just whatever's handy. I really want to get more into oil painting and watercolor once things slow down, which, I think, will [happen] sometime over the next year. I've been doing that cartoon crap for so long! [More general laughter.]

Sketch: Well, I do want to talk about some of your plans outside of *Liberty Meadows*, but first wanted to touch on two other forms of illustration that you've become known for. Namely, your work doing spot illustrations, like those in the *Titanic Tales* anthology and the Jim Grim novel, and the other is your erotic work. Do you find doing the spot illos similar to doing the covers and pin ups, or does it need a completely different mind set for you?

Cho: It's actually a different mindset. Spot illustrations are usually the very last thing I do for the book. They're bridges and afterthoughts to aid the story flow. All the spot illustrations that you saw [were] not my ideas; it was Al Gross, the writer's, ideas. After we basically laid everything out with the big illustrations, big full page illustrations, he would tell me, "I think we need a head shot here, and a big jungle cat here, a monkey here," that type of thing. He'd give me a list of all the spot illustrations that he wanted. And on very small pieces of paper, just a little larger than what's reproduced in the book, I'd draw the spot illustrations.

Sketch: Oh, so it's basically actual size, then?

Cho: Right. So I'd basically do it right there on the spot, and give it to him. So the spot illustrations in *Titanic Tales* are just basically fast and small.

Sketch: So they're almost like sketches, then.

Cho: Yeah. And the erotic work ... I guess this erotic art thing all happened with the *Cheesecake and Critters* portfolio, which I put out when *Liberty Meadows* was in its first year. That sold very well. It sold out, actually. I don't think even I have one. [General laughter] And then that just got the ball rolling. And *Cavewoman* happened. I'm a huge fan of Budd Root, and Budd Root's *Cavewoman*. His stuff is just absolutely amazing. He has a certain spontaneous energy to his drawing, and his women... Holy Cow! Budd does women only he can do. I love Budd's women. Anyway, I tried my hand at *Cavewoman*, with Budd's permission, because I'm such a huge fan.

Actually, I just had the same conversation with Budd not too long ago. We were just talking about women in general, and our approach to drawing women, and he and I are of the same mind set. We don't want anything dirty or vulgar. You know what I'm saying?

Sketch: Oh, yeah. Sexuality is a natural part of human life, but that doesn't mean that you should exploit it.

Cho: Right, right. And so, just over time, like I said I built up a reputation among many things as a Good Girl artist. So I guess I do everything. Monkeys. Women. Oil painting.

Sketch: Monkeys with women in oil paintings. [General laughter]

Cho: Yeah, even better!

Anyhow, the pin-ups, and the erotic pin-ups and that stuff, is done mostly for my own amusement.

Sketch: So what's coming up in the future for you? I mean, you're taking *Liberty Meadows* strictly into the comic books and collections; is that all we'll be seeing from you in the future?

Cho: Oh, no. I'm working on a creator

owned project which, once I have most of it completely done, I'm going to shop it around. At the top of my list are Image and WildStorm, and if they pass on it I'm going to go ahead and publish it through Insight Studios. It's called *Guns and Dinos*, and it's a fast paced comedy adventure story. It's basically a cross between *Jurassic Park* and *Tremors*. It's going to be a hoot. It's going to be violent, but at the same time it's going to be very funny. Also, I'm planning on more *Cavewoman* stuff with Budd Root. I'm still working on *Cavewoman: Savage Tales*, which was supposed to have been done about two years ago. [General laughter]

Sketch: If memory serves, the *Cavewoman: Savage Tales* is a one-shot, right?

Cho: Yeah. And I also just got emailed and talked with Brian Bendis, and he wants me to do several pages for a huge special *Ultimate Team Up* issue that's coming up, which I've agreed to do.

Sketch: Do you know which characters, aside from *Spider-Man*, you'll be drawing?

Cho: I have no idea. He hasn't sent me a script.

Sketch: That's very cool, because I know that you do have a fondness for some of their stuff. One of the real pleasant surprises in the sketchbook you sold at San Diego was your version of *Venom*.

Cho: Actually, my favorite character is Wolverine. [Laughter]

Sketch: Oh really?

Cho: Yeah. I guess that's everybody's favorite character.

Sketch: What about at DC? Would it be safe to assume that Wonder Woman might be close to the top of your list?

Cho: Kind of. More Linda Carter as Wonder Woman than the comic book, to be honest with you. Actually, I was a Marvel

boy when I was growing up. I didn't really collect any DC except for *Teen Titans* and an occasional *Batman*. I don't know why. I enjoyed Marvel stuff better than DC.

Sketch: Any other comics work coming up, or something else that's on your slate for the future?

Cho: I'm also doing a couple of book illustrations.

Sketch: Great. Can you give us some specifics, or is it too soon on those?

Cho: I'm probably going to do something for *Wandering Star*. I pretty much got their verbal agreement, it's not on paper yet, but they want me to do *Breckenridge Elkins*, by Robert E. Howard. Do you know which character that is?

Sketch: Oh, yeah. I'm a huge Robert E. Howard fan.

Cho: I'm doing that. I'm probably going to happen in the next two years. Full oil painting, and stuff like that. It's going to be like that wonderful [Gary] Gianni Solomon Kane book.

Sketch: Right, the definitive editions of Howard stories, that series that Frazetta's done work on, too.

Cho: Right. Actually, they're working on the Mark Schultz Conan [edition right now]. I was at Mark Schultz' studio not too long ago, and he showed me some of the Conan paintings he was working on, and they're just awe-inspiring. I mean, if you thought this guy was a genius with a brush and ink, his oil paintings are just equally stunning. I just can't wait for that book to come out. Gary Gianni's also doing the second part of the Conan project, which will be just as beautiful as Mark Schultz's. But, after that Conan project is finished, they said they'll tap me for *Breckenridge Elkins*.

And, also, I'll probably going to do a Princess Yasmini Talbot Mundy novel, with Mark Wheatley for Insight Studios,



A censored Liberty Meadows strip.

which is a follow up to the *Jim Grim* book. I'll be doing black and white illustrations, maybe a couple of oils. I don't know for sure, it depends on the schedule. Also, I haven't read the Yasmini stories - I may not like them, and not want to illustrate it. And I will also be working on - if he gets the copyright, that is - on this huge book, which I think Mark told me not to say [anything about right now]. So right now, Mark is looking into copyright...and stuff like that. My plate's pretty full.

Sketch: Is there any chance that we'll be seeing *Liberty Meadows*, or any of your other work, on TV or at the movies in the future?

Cho: [Laughter] I've been approached over the years by several animation studios and, you know, if the right deal is on the table, I'll take it. But, so far, it's been kind of a half-assed deal [that's being offered].

Sketch: Ah, one of those deals where you'd lose all control over the characters in all mediums, or some similar nonsense?

Cho: Right, right. So I say, "No thank you, my plate is full enough." But if anything does happen, I'd like to see a computer animation, or even claymation, version of *Liberty Meadows*. I think that would actually fit very well.

Sketch: Would you want to work on the

script yourself, or have some other direct role in that project?

Cho: Uhm, a little bit. Not too much, because they have all the stories, they could use all my stories as reference. So I really don't want to jump in and step on people's toes when they're writing the stuff. There are people who are trained to write scripts like that.

Sketch: And you don't really have the urge to do that yourself right now?

Cho: Right, exactly. As long as they stay true to the characters, and some of the major story points, I'm fine with it.

Sketch: OK, here's another inevitable question: when can we expect to see a *Brandy*, or *Dean*, action figure, or some other cool merchandise? [General laughter.]

Cho: I don't know. I'm actually working with a couple people right now.

As I told you earlier [just before the interview began,] my syndicate signed an agreement with some Italian statuette maker, and the guy's working on a statue of Brandy and Truman and Oscar, which I've seen the prototype for, and it looks pretty good. They were all in pieces, but they looked pretty good. Actually it's shaping up pretty well. I'm not sure what they're going to do with it, if they're going to make it into a resin kit, or cold cast porcelain, or what.

And I'm not exactly sure when it's going to come out [either].

But I'm working with a great computer animator and artist in California right now who's making a computer 3-D image of Brandy for me, just for fun. And if it turns out well, I might shop that around. So far, it's looking fantastic! [General laughter] I'm just amazed how far computer animation has come. This is just on the personal computer type stuff, and it's just like something right out of *Toy Story*, and the guy's doing a tremendous job.

Actually, he's working on several projects for Marvel. His name's Scott Salva, and he's a fantastic artist. Actually, he's the guy who's doing *The Lab* with Mike Kunkel at the *Hero Bear and the Kid* company, [Astonish comics]. And he's actually working on Spider-Man for Marvel, a computer animated Spider-Man comic book. It looks pretty good. I was actually very surprised. [General laughter] You know, whenever you think of a computer animated comic book, you think about the Iron Man [Crash graphic novel] from the early 80s that was all blocky. So what he's doing now is just absolutely amazing.

Sketch: Yeah, the strides they've made in computer modeling in just the past two years alone have been phenomenal.

Cho: He made the whole cityscape of New York in computer, and at this point, it's just like a director moving the camera angles and all that. It's just ... wow. Kinda scary. He's gonna put all of us out of business. [General laughter.]

Sketch: Well, with that looming threat in mind, what do you get out of doing your art? It kind of sounds like it's a need for you, almost like it's something you just have to do. Like it's not just a job but it's literally a part of you, and that you'd be doing it even if you didn't make a living at it. Is that true?

Cho: Yeah. It really is. It's almost like an addiction, although addiction is a very negative label for it. It's part of me, and there are all these images in my mind that I want to put out. That almost makes me sound like a crazy person. [Laughter] It's a passion in my life that will always be with me, and will be part of me. I just love to draw. I really don't know what I'd do if I wasn't drawing. It defines who I am, and it's part of my life, and I just hope that I'll continue as long as I'm able to.

Sketch: Any last thoughts?

Cho: Be cool, stay in school.



Pencil illustration of Brandy



House! Insight Studios

by Allan Gross

Excerpted and updated from *IS ART: The Art of Insight Studios*



odds are good that most of the residents on the street don't even know where Insight Studios is, or that for over twenty years the residents of this house have produced unique art and some of the most influential comics ever created.

The studio was started by Mark Wheatley and photographer Kathy Wolfe in 1978. When Kathy moved on to other pursuits, Mark Wheatley offered long time correspondent and occasional long-distance collaborator Marc Hempel a chance to move east and join him. Marc Hempel shared Mark Wheatley's love of comics and art, and, while both had been pursuing separate careers in illustration, it would be their work together that would initially grab the attention of the comic industry. Their ground breaking work together on projects such as *Mars*, *Blood of the Innocent*, and *Breathaker* would then catapult them to critical acclaim for their individual successes on titles such as *Gregory*, *Radical Dreamer*, and *Tug & Buster*.

However, perhaps the greatest legacy of the studio is the camaraderie surrounding all those who have walked through the door. Some have come seeking advice, some instruction, and some a much needed job. While they have found these things, they have also found friendship, knowledge, self-respect, and even enlightenment. Some have moved on. Some have stayed. Many return, comet-like, for working vacations on the occasional project. It is an amazing atmosphere, generated by the shared, honest desire of everyone involved to create meaningful, emotional and, of course, insightful projects. All in all, there is an amazing sense of community surrounding the studio.

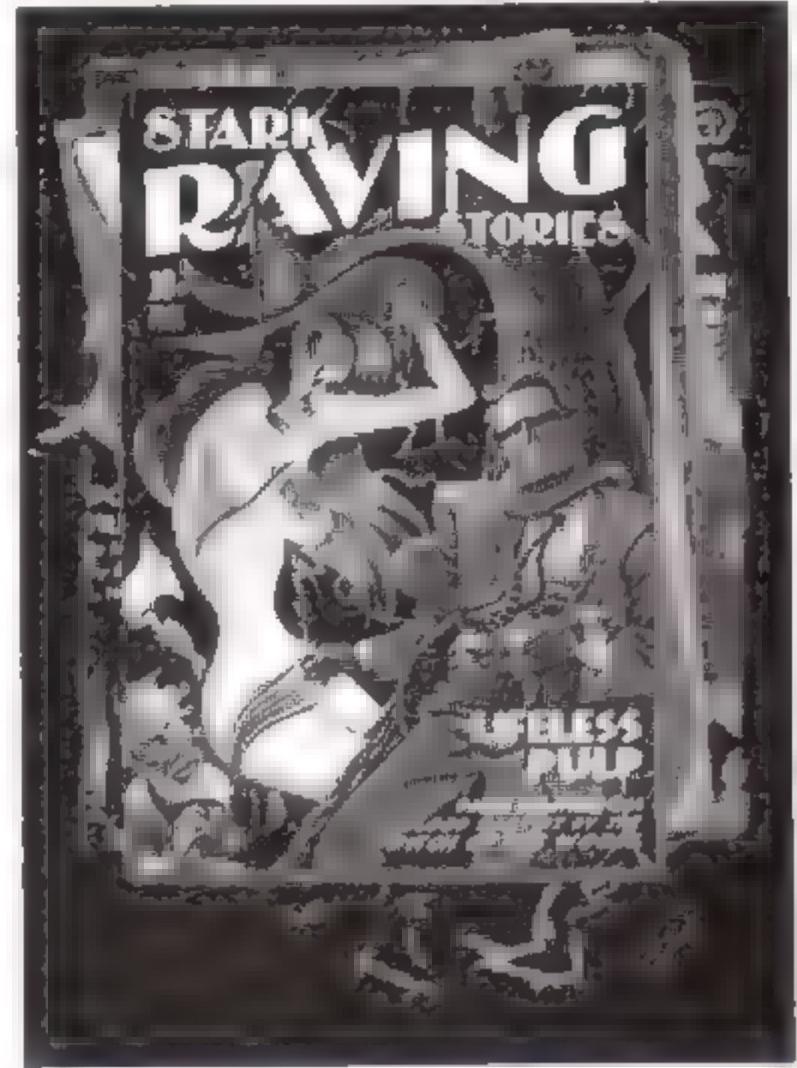
While there are many threads that tie together the diverse people and projects at Insight Studios, one that cannot be overlooked is the Edgar Rice Burroughs connection. In addition to being involved in writing, drawing and publishing Tarzan comics and comic strips, studio members have been long time members, and deeply involved with, the Burroughs Bibliophiles national and local fan organizations. It was this passion that led me to the studio. Mark helped focus my rough writing skills which led to

my sale of scripts for Tarzan comic books published by Semic International and Dark Horse and United Features Syndicate, with Gray Morrow drawing my Tarzan Sunday strip stories. And from there came assorted opportunities writing for comics and for television.

Ironically, when Frank "monkey boy" Cho joined Insight Studios, he had never read the Tarzan novels. However, when I gave him a copy of *Tarzan of the Apes*, things would never be the same. Frank became enthralled with Burroughs' work, taking his own love for drawing monkeys and shapely damsels and turning them into passionate pen and ink masterpieces. These drawings would become a catalyst in building a strong friendship between Frank and fellow Burroughs' enthusiast Al Williamson. Some of Al's long hidden John Carter sketches would finally be published as part of the Insight Studios acclaimed 1998 pulp homage, *Titanic Tales*. The sequel is now in production as is a collection of Al Williamson's other works, as well as attracting other industry powerhouses.

This story is not unique. One of the charms of Insight is the desire to do projects that appeal to the members of the studio and our ties to our influences. This summer Insight Studios published *Gray Morrow Visionary*, only months before Gray's untimely death. Already working with Gray on the Tarzan newspaper strip and the on-line comic strip *The Body*, Mark Wheatley and I agreed that it was long past time for Gray to have a high quality art book featuring his work. *Gray Morrow Visionary* showcased many unseen paintings, and the fifty year career of Gray's outstanding illustration work for science fiction paperbacks, horror magazines such as *Creepy* and *Eerie*, and other areas where Gray excelled, such as movie posters, cartoon animation, comics, game boxes, and newspaper strips. While working with friends and legends is one of the great pleasures of the studio, the primary focal point is the three main artists, Frank Cho, Marc Hempel and Mark Wheatley. Those glancing through *IS ART: The Art of Insight Studios* will quickly see that here there is no "house" style. Each artist is unique, both in technique and in approach to art.

Frank Cho's work screams for attention. When Insight Studios published *Frank Cho Illustrator* in 1999, it was the unexpected success story of the year. It broke sales records for an art book in the comic book industry, both in initial orders and reorders. It also highlights what makes Frank so popular—his crossover appeal. Frank can draw funny cartoon animals and he can draw amazing, anatomically correct animals. His ability is much like that of Frank Frazetta,





Ultimately, the public's obsession with Frank's work comes from his ability to grab the observer's attention. This comes from his excellent art, his comic timing and his uncanny grasp of mainstream pop culture.

On the other hand, Marc Hempel's works are masterpieces of complex emotional and psychological situations. His extensive and diverse artistic abilities allow him to pull from a range of styles and influences, and then deliver his insights back in a painting, cartoon or pun, evoking a powerful response from the intended audience. No matter the genre, Marc's work manages to perfectly distill some aspect of the human condition – often in a single comic panel. While his work can be deceptively simple in appearance, it is actually the result of a tremendous amount of preparation and development – highly crafted, professionally delivered, and built on an unshakeable foundation from his study of fine artists and classic cartoonists.

Meanwhile, Mark Wheatley is the consummate storyteller. Mark has had an extremely diverse career in the arts. He has been a writer, an artist, a publisher, an editor, and a production manager. He has worked in comics, radio and television. He has acted as script doctor and critic, tutored assistants and acted as an agent. He has created single characters and lines of comics. All with one goal in mind: to tell stories. Every aspect of his art is focused on the story. And as the real force behind nearly every Insight Studios' project, the story of Insight Studios is truly but another story he has told, with the medium being his enjoyment of art and his love for his friends.

With this level of talent and love for experimentation, it is not surprising that the studio is not fixed to any medium. One aspect of this grew from the studio's association with Steve Conley. I first met Steve through the studio when he illustrated a *Doctor Cyborg* short story I wrote for *Titanic Tales*. In addition to his own comic book publishing, Steve Conley has done more than anyone to reinvent comic strips on the Internet. Steve's "tooncasting", or as he calls it "virtual syndication," has changed the nature of comic strip distribution allowing any web page designer to run a "tooncasted" strip on their personal home pages, having it automatically update on a daily basis.

Following Steve's lead, Insight Studios began to develop web strips for Insight Studios' Sunny Fundays (sunnyfundays.com) pages. There are now hundreds of web pages across the world running our strips, generating millions of accesses per month, with the number of viewers increasing every day. Currently, the Insight Studios' Sunny Fundays page runs the raw and uncensored version of Frank Cho's *Liberty Meadows* and Gray Morrow's last work on *The Body*. Mike Oeming provides his powerful visceral art for *Doctor Cyborg* as well as his Viking epic *Hammer of the Gods*. Marc Hempel's *Naked Brain* strips run weekly while the site also premieres Mark Wheatley's *Frankenstein Mobster*, and Dan Krall and Neal Shaffer's *Atmos and the Variable*. And of course, Steve Conley's award winning *Astounding Space Thrills*.

And, while Insight Studios continues to embrace the new technologies, the foundation of the studio will always be the people. And the legion of great artists who have at one time or another worked on an Insight Studios based project is staggering. Agents

who also transferred readily from comic strip art to the world of illustration. Frank Cho's popularity is also reminiscent of Frazetta's success. The accolades and fans flock to him.

and other comic professionals sigh with a pang of jealousy when they speak of Insight Studios' longevity — sincerely touched by its rare ability to maintain its integrity and focus in a world that has taken many of them from their youthful passion for the industry to a profession that is "just a job." Some, like Adam Hughes have had meteoric ascents to stardom. Others have enjoyed a short but satisfying career before choosing to pursue other options or other creative endeavors. Some began as studio assistants. Dan Krall took his lessons learned at the studio and his quirky art style, parleying them into prestigious illustration work for *Details* magazine and now appears headed toward a very successful career in comics. And today, when John Staton isn't coloring *Liberty Meadows*, *Hammer of the Gods* or *Doctor Cyborg*, he's developing his own Manga influenced strip, called *Department of Motor Vehicles (D.M.V.)*. In *D.M.V.*, John has created a futuristic universe on an epic scale, mixing his love of Manga and his limitless imagination. *D.M.V.* is a fascinating tale of a futuristic world where cars and highways have taken over, and parking is an overriding concern that "drives" society.

With all of the talent and new projects on the horizon, it is easy to be excited about the next twenty years at Insight Studios. The success of Mike Oeming and Mark Wheatley's comic book version of *Hammer of the Gods* is a great example. Marc Hempel's new *Naked Brain* and *Suit Cases* series will step from the internet to comic books while at the same time developing strips for high profile magazines. Meanwhile, in a bold and unprecedented move, Frank Cho has decided to take his award winning *Liberty Meadows* out of newspaper syndication to allow him to concentrate on publishing the comic book version without the restrictive barriers of PC driven newspapers.

With everything going on at Insight Studios, fans of the studio can continue to expect the unexpected. What they should expect is a wide range of projects dedicated to the highest quality, inventive storytelling and amazing, original art. After twenty years, things at Insight Studios are speeding up, not slowing down. The books are selling out and the Internet strips are bringing more and more opportunities. Next year will be the busiest year ever. In writing *IS ART: The Art of Insight Studios*, I haven't actually discussed the art in too much detail. I've left categorization and critique to the experts and the peanut gallery. What I have tried to show, through the anecdotes, history, and quotations, is what is behind the art. Perhaps it is best, in closing, to go back to the writer who, more than any, managed to sum up human experience—borrowing a theme that eloquently expresses what it means to be part of Insight Studios. And that is, "To thine own self be true." Because that "IS ART."



From Insight Studios (left to right) Mark Wheatley, Frank Cho, Allan Gross, Mike Oeming and Marc Hempel



HOW TO DRAW MANGA BRANDY

by John Staton

One of the more interesting recurring gags that Frank Cho uses in his comic strip, *Liberty Meadows*, is his "How to Draw" series of color Sundays pages. Periodically in these strips, Frank issues the wild promise of demonstrating his drawing techniques to the aspiring artists among his readers. The punch line to these strips is that the demonstration is woefully incomplete, showing only one or two rudimentary sketches before proceeding immediately to a finished piece, rendered usually with the indecipherable detail of a Franklin Booth drawing. Seeing such demonstrations done in the past with the utmost seriousness, I always enjoyed the humor of these installments, until I became Frank's partner in crime.

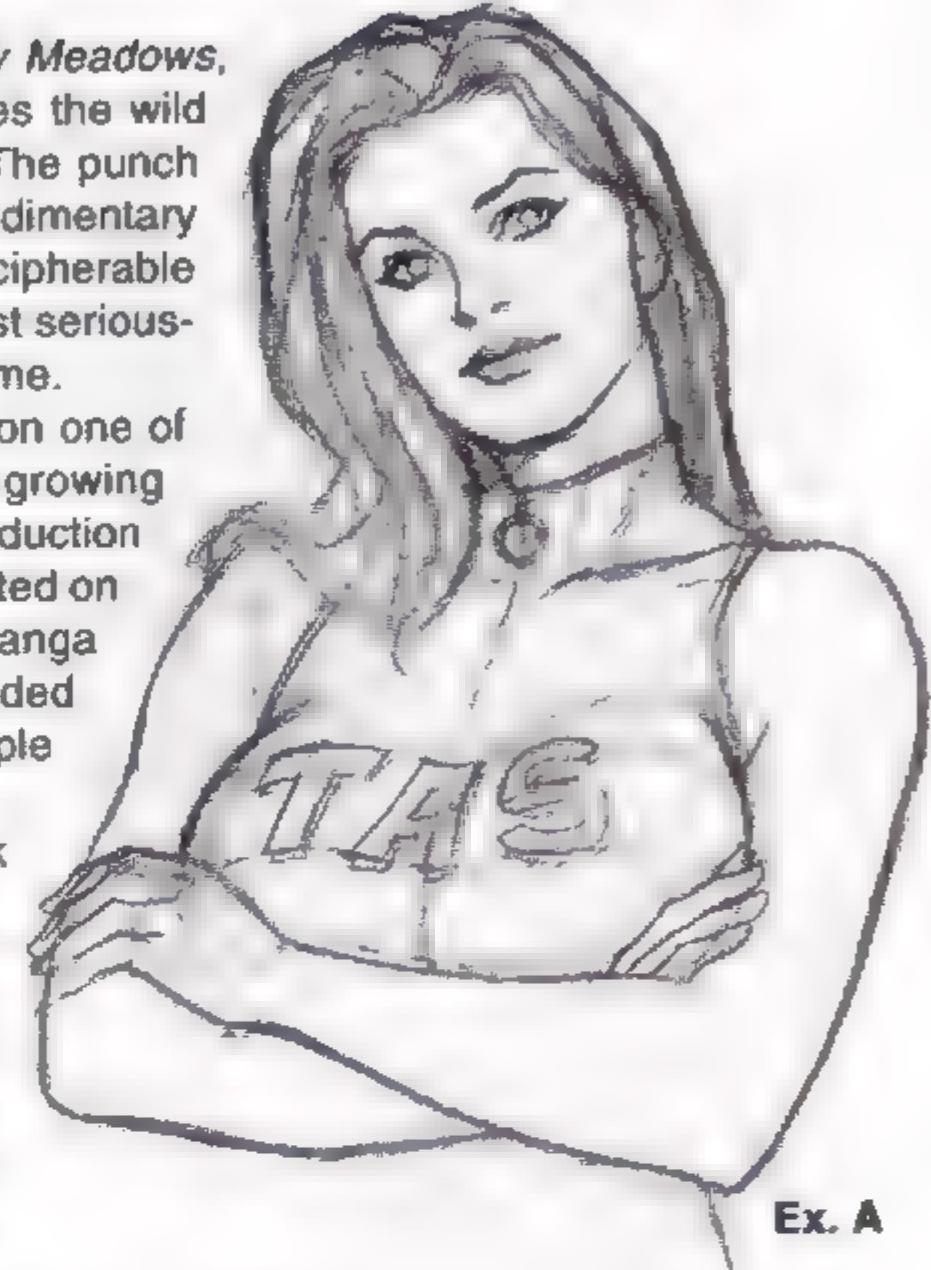
Several months ago my Insight Studios buddy quite graciously asked for my participation on one of these ersatz tutorials. For some time, Frank had played with the idea of addressing the growing popularity of manga in his "How to" strips, and who better to lend a hand than the resident production assistant who kept two chibi Gundams, a Ryoko doll, and a model of the bike from 'Akira' mounted on top of his computer? Of course I eagerly accepted the request, and ended up sketching manga style pictures of Brandy and Jen dressed as sailor scouts. As is his custom, Frank preceded these drawings with a sketch of a simple oval, followed by a sketch of an oval and a few simple lines, completing the incomplete lesson.

While I appreciated the humor of this particular strip, and remained flattered that Frank solicited my contribution, I am forced to confess no small degree of guilt for failing to provide a more comprehensive demonstration on how to mangacize (Take that, spell checker!) Frank Cho's winsome brunette. Thanks to *Sketch* magazine, I can finally remedy that situation.

After securing Frank's permission to irrecognizably deform his beloved character yet again, I asked him to provide me with a drawing of Brandy as a starting point. Ever the generous soul, Frank provided that art, in an annoyingly short period of time (example A.) Cursing myself for actually volunteering to follow Frank's act, I set upon my task.

Since I have a more realistic piece of artwork at my disposal, I thought it would be good to point out that both pseudo photo-realistic works like Frank's, and the exaggerations of it that I am about to effect, are both condensations of reality. In both styles, our goals are to take elements of reality and whittle them down to a group of symbols that contain all the suggestion, charm, and immediacy of truth, but can be reliably duplicated multiple times and on inflexible schedules. I just do it with bigger eyes.

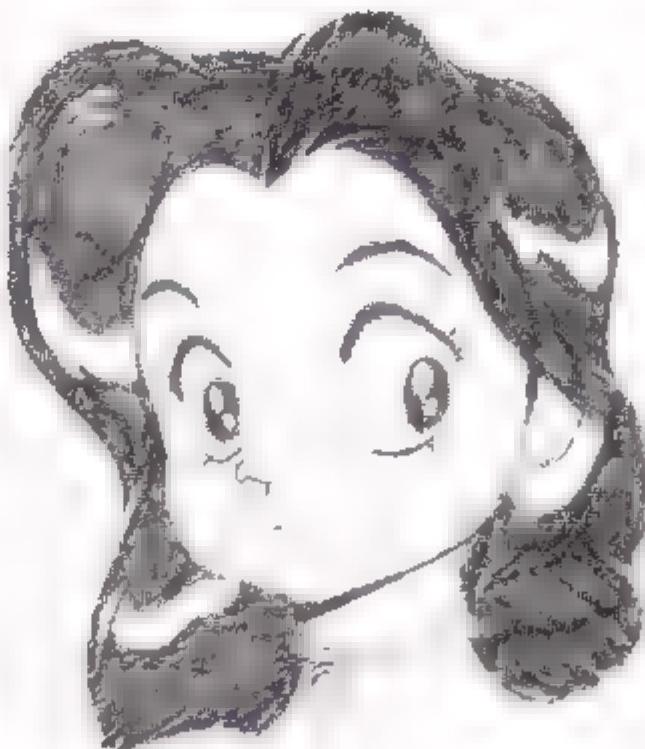
Before beginning in earnest, I experimented with a variety of ways in which to mangacize my subject.



Ex. A

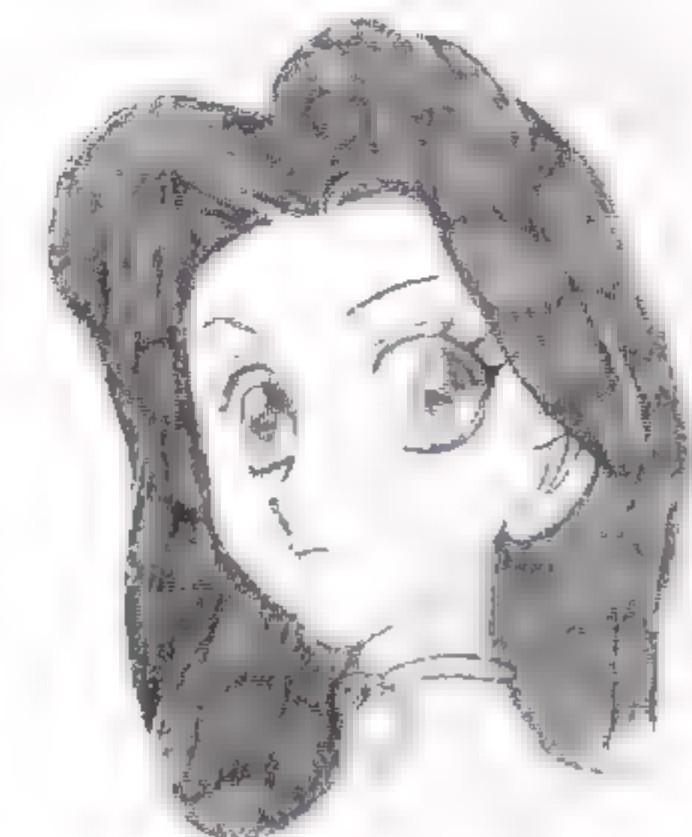


Ex. B Gunsmith Brandy



Ex. C Brandy ½

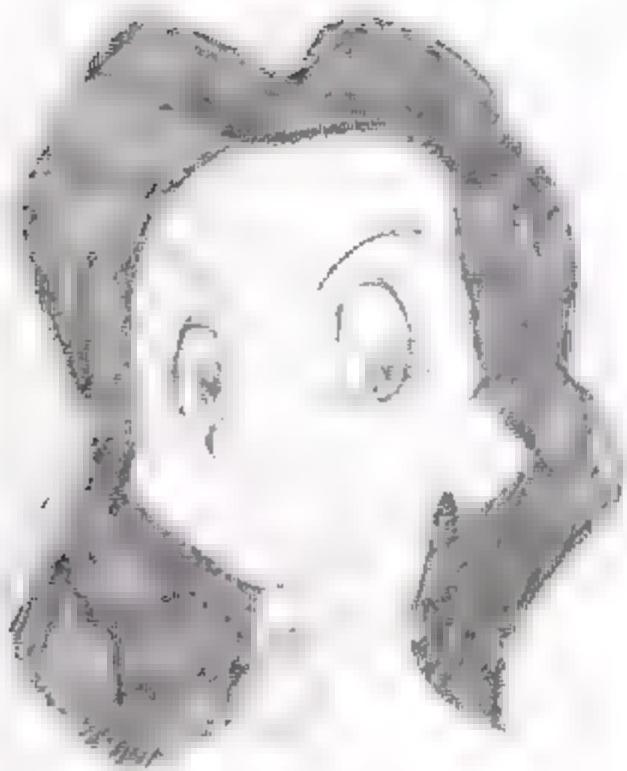
For my first attempt (example B), I took inspiration from the works of Kenichi Sonoda, who is famed for such adventures as *Gunsmith Cats*. In this design, the character's features are defined by bold curves that are punctuated by sharp angles. This is noticeable in the character's eyebrows and nose. The hair is composed mostly of sweeping curves and broad highlights, while accentuated with line work to suggest texture.



Ex. D Magical Girl Brandy

I tried a slightly more gentle design for my second attempt (example C), using less hard edges and slightly more squashed lower facial features inspired by Rumiko Takahashi of *Ranma ½* fame. The more infantile curved jaw line is reminiscent of the designs featured in the more absurd comedic manga.

Thinking back to the actual sailor Brandy strip, I experimented with the more stretched and willowy features and more ornate, swimming pool eyes of a shoujo, or girl's manga character, such as Chiho Saito's *Revolutionary Girl Utena* (example D).



Ex. E Brandy Ball Z

I have no ready excuses for my fourth attempt (example E); I just wanted to make a go at an Akira Toriyama styled Brandy. Please note the lack of highlights in the hair I had observed that, for the most part, the *Dragon Ball* artist tends to modify a character's hair by silhouetting it into bizarre signature shapes. I was about to try some trademark spikes, until I noticed Frank going for his exacto knife.



Ex. F Final Brandy

In my final version, I tried to combine some elements of these various styles of art (example F). In this design I again went for the Sonoda influence, but this time being more conservative with the exaggeration of the eyes. In a move not common in the work of many manga artists, I decided to retain Brandy's signature pout. Although there are exceptions, most manga artists tend to avoid drawing the lips of a character, opting instead to merely suggest them when necessary.

Initial Sketch

Begin by plotting out the relative positions of the elements of your composition. This can be accomplished by sketching the most basic geometric shapes in the approximate positions of the character's body within the borders of your drawing. In the case of Manga Brandy, sketch a circle above an inverted trapezoid connected by one slightly angled line (example G). Please note that in many manga character designs the heads on the characters tend to be larger than conventional western heroic proportions. Instead of eight heads tall, a manga character may weigh in at seven or six.

Ex. G



Refining the Figure

Once the character's place and gesture have been established, add additional line work to map out the organs and limbs (example H). Please note the horizontal and vertical bisection of the skull is still an essential tool for plotting out the facial features, even on an exaggerated manga face. Since the eyes in particular are subject to such radical deformation, you may find yourself plotting them well above and/or well below the conventional horizontal bisecting line. I've seen some systems guess at regarding placement of the all-important manga eye (eyes being spread 1 1/2 eye widths apart, rather than the standard one), but when it comes down to it, many times it's just a matter of what looks right.

Ex. H

Add Individual Features

Once the foundation of anatomical placement has been laid, one can start adding those idiosyncrasies that make your character unique (Example I). Features to add at this point could include eyes, hairline and bodice. The actual eye design here is an important window toward establishing visual identity. The eyes I have chosen for Manga Brandy are slightly smaller than one may expect for this style, but in this case I have to defer to the fact that this is still supposed to be Brandy, and as such she should

Ex. I

contain some Cho characteristics. One readily apparent element is the absence of decorative highlighting Frank applies to his female character's irises (example J).



Ex. J

This is quite a contrast to the customary manga style eye, whose extreme size lends to its use as point of ornamentation (Example K).



Ex. K



Ex. L

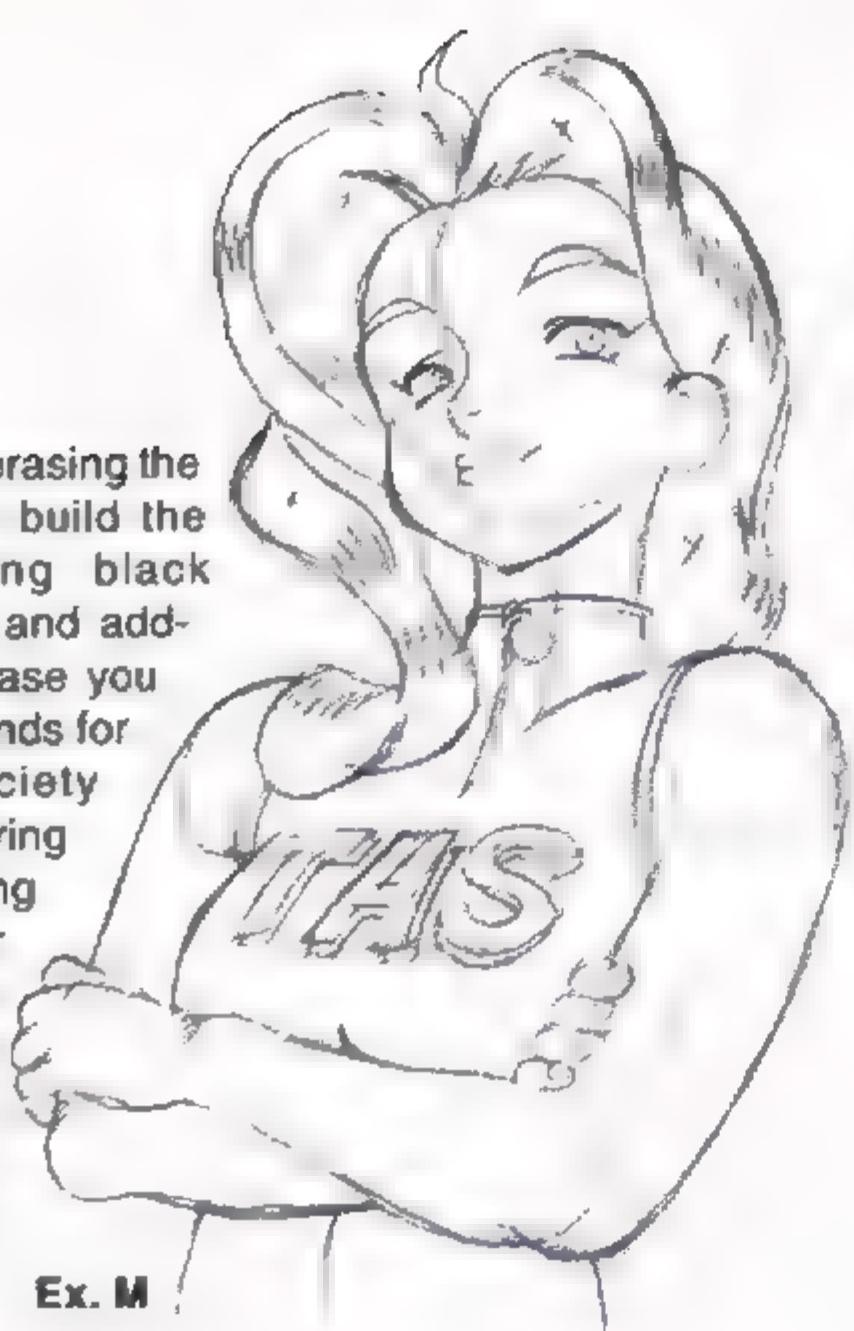
Add Details

This step involves the addition of surface elements such as costuming and hair (example L). In this phase, I find it interesting how the rendering of both elements requires a knowledge of how drapery falls about a body. In this piece, it is not as essential for Manga Brandy's costume as it is form fitting, but when drawing the hair, it may help to think of it as a broad curtain that follows the volume of the wearer's form. In many cases manga hair can even obey gravity.

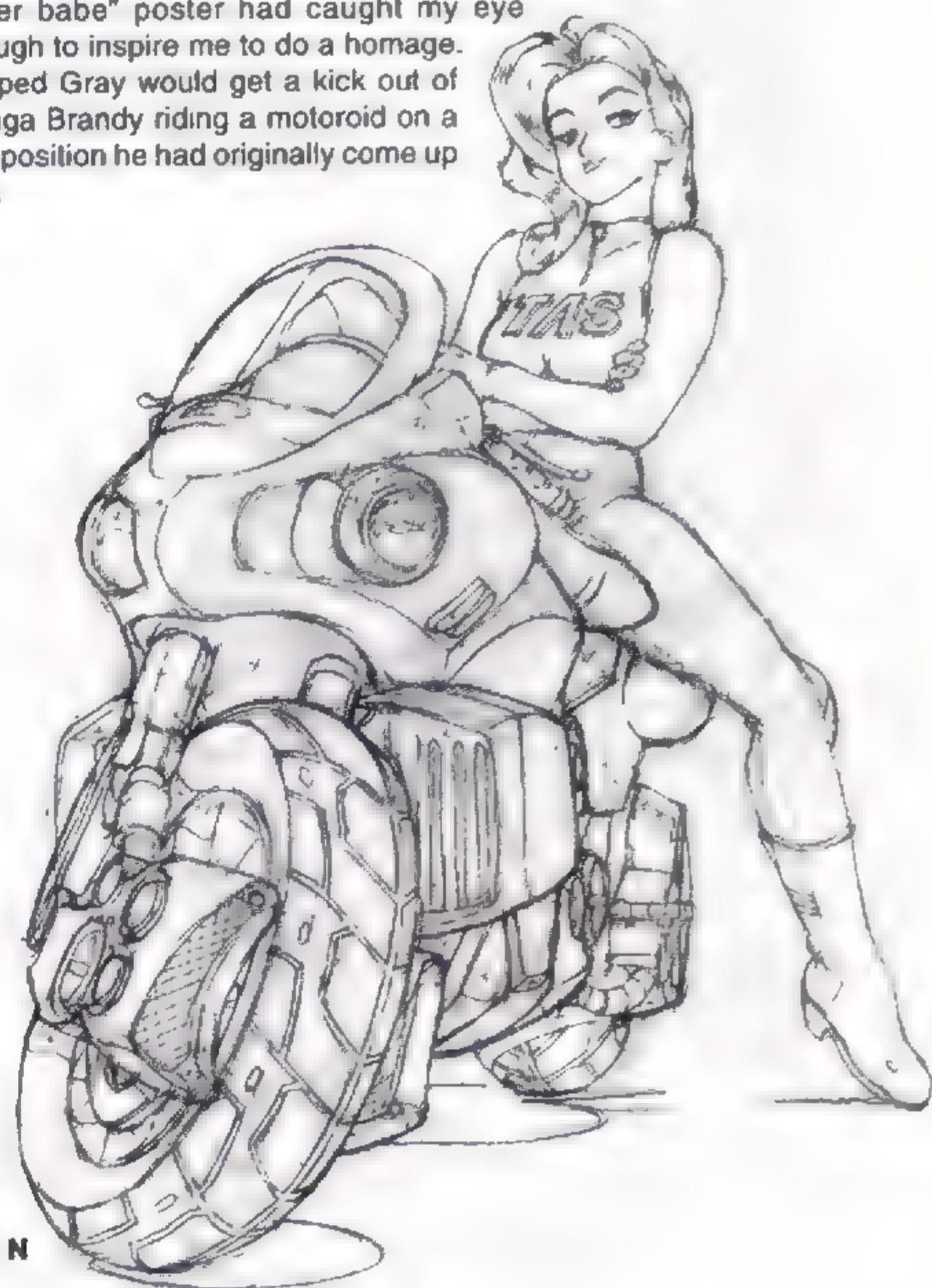
Clean Up

This step involves erasing the sketch lines used to build the composition, plotting black spaces for the inker, and adding final details. In case you were curious, TAS stands for Terrapin Anime Society (example M). Considering Frank's habit of having his characters wear items that celebrate his affiliation with the University of Maryland, I thought it appropriate to do the same.

Ex. M

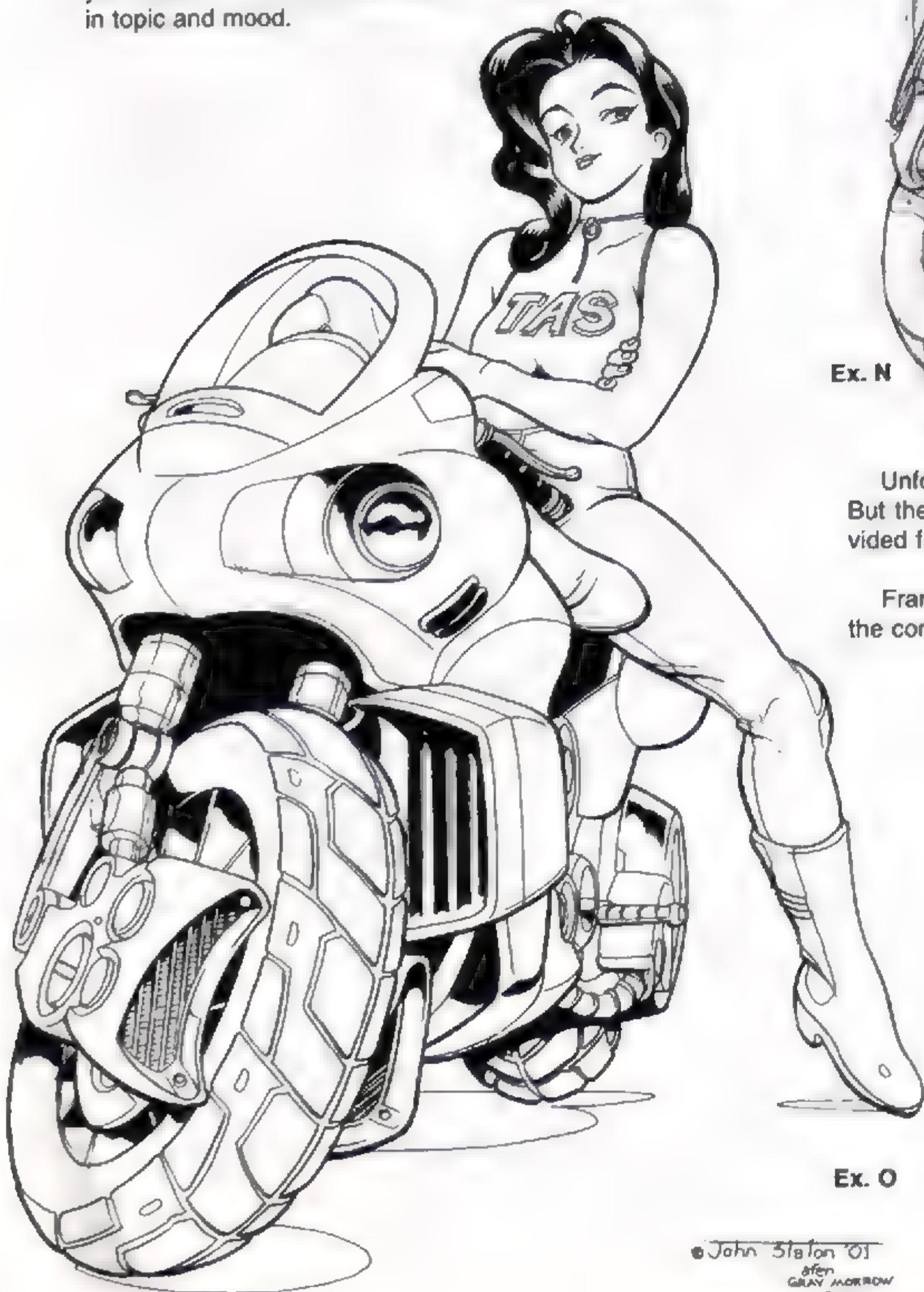


As you can see, the drawing I have just demonstrated is actually part of a larger composition (example N.) It is actually based on an old movie poster painted by fellow Insight contributor, Gray Morrow. I was impressed with several of the drive-in theater style advertisements Gray had contributed to the *Gray Morrow Visionary* art book. This particular "biker babe" poster had caught my eye enough to inspire me to do a homage. I hoped Gray would get a kick out of Manga Brandy riding a motoroid on a composition he had originally come up with.



Add Even More Details (Just Kidding)

I hope you've found the demonstration useful, and I hope you'll bear with me as I conclude this article with a radical shift in topic and mood.



Ex. O

© John Stalton '01
after GRAY MORROW
C&O



For more of John's work, visit
Insight Studio's web site at
www.insightstudiosgroup.com.



By Beau Smith

From The Ranch Rants, Raves, and Random Notes

Voice Mail and Editors

One of the first things that I'm gonna do when I end up running all of the comic book companies is to gut the voice mail system. Originally they were to make juggling work more efficient, but much like a union, you can have too much or not enough. In this case... too much.

I don't care what an editor tells you, the fact is they use voice mail to hide behind. Plain and simple. I know that other lines of work do the same, but we're talking comic books here, so that's where we're gonna focus.

Let me give you another hunk of bad news, the "Good Ol' Boy" network is still in use with the major publishers. You can just about figure that if you see a list of creators on a book that they are old buddies with the editor from days gone by. If not, then they are "Flavors Of The Month," or have written a really bad novel, been on a bad TV show, written a worse screenplay, or have cleaned the pool of William Shatner one summer.

Don't get me wrong. There are some really good editors out there. You just have to hunt a little harder to find 'em. This isn't sour grapes talking. These are cold hard facts that you should know, as you gear up for your safari into the dark jungle of getting work in comics. To get the attention of editors you're gonna have to be creative, outgoing, cunning, and talented as well. It can be done, but don't expect anything to be given to you or fall into your lap. It's gonna take some hard thinking and even harder work. As I've mentioned many times in my articles, you're gonna have to really work on the assistant editors. Some of 'em haven't been tainted yet.

Editors and Creators at Conventions

When you attend a comic book convention big or small, ask questions of the editors and creators there. If there is an editor yes give them your sample of art or writing. But also ask them if they are looking for anything particular right now. What their publishing plans are for the next 6 months to a year. What they are looking for. Even ask what characters are free up. Most of the time there is an "invisible" list of characters that other creators already have proposals in on. You don't wanna waste your time writing up a proposal if there is some established creator with his hand in the cookie jar already.

If you're talking to a creator, ask them what they have coming up that has a green light. Then ask them what proposals they have in. That way you can get a feel of what

the publishers are looking for and what might be taken. Ask them what editors they have enjoyed working with, and why. That will give you an inside track on a possible editor to hit on.

Ask writers what kind of artists they enjoy working with. Ask if editors like them to work plot "Marvel Style," or if they like full script. Ask artists the same kind of questions. What writers they enjoy working with and why. How many pages they can do a day. What character they would love to work on that they haven't yet.

Yes, tell them that you admire their work, and be honest about that. What I'm trying to get across to you is to dig deeper and make the most of your 5 to 15 minutes with this person. It's good to mention that you BUY their books and you will follow their work. Ask them if they have a web site. It's a great way to check up on them and see what's going on.

Head Cheese

If you step up to the plate enough, sooner or later you're gonna get a hit. May not be a home run, but you're gonna get on base sometime.

Here's something that not a lot of folks do. Write a letter(s) to the big guy, the head honcho, the head cheese, the big shot. Paul Levitz-DC Comics, Bill Jemas-Marvel Comics, Mike Richardson-Dark Horse Comics, Mark Alessi-CrossGen Comics, Jim Valentino-Image Comics, Brian Pulido-Chaos Comics, Bob Hickey-Sketch magazine... you get the picture. Write these guys and let 'em know what you think of the way they're running the company, and what you would like to see from that company. Give them the history of you BUYING and SUPPORTING their product. Let them know what you would like to see in the future. Ask them what their plans are for the future. Give them something to answer. If they write you back, thank them and send another letter shorter, and ask another question.

Start a line of communication. After a while a possible friendship and respect might blossom. If and when that happens, then ask them who they suggest you send a proposal in to. What editor do they feel would be good to reach out and touch? Ya never know... they might say, "Send it to me and I'll see that they get it." You can't have a better pimp than that. If just one of them writes you back it's great. If one of them writes you back twice, even better. You have nothing to lose but postage and a little time.

Self Publishing, Ash Cans, and Comics

When I go to conventions - and I have gone to many in my 16 years in this business - one thing I always do is stop by the small press and micro-press tables and pick up comics. Sometimes they're real printer-made comic books, some are ash cans, some are copied and stapled at the creator's real day job. I have always enjoyed seeing what is out there trying to get in. It's the surf where the truly stoked shoot the curl. This is where the hard core passion of comics lies. Everyone is raw, excited, and not yet jaded. Where eyes are clear and bright and ideas mean everything. It's the place that all of us should keep in some form within ourselves.

If any of you out there have a comic that you have put together, I'd like to look at it. I can't promise that I can get you any closer to a big deal or even getting published, but I'd like to look at it and give ya my thoughts if ya want 'em. Make sure you have a self-addressed stamped envelope or an email address, and I will let ya know what this ol' stump jumper thinks of it. If you wanna take me up on this, here's where you send it and photos of great looking babes to:

Beau Smith
The Flying Fist Ranch
PO Box 706
Ceredo, WV
25507

Wrap Up

That's about it, amigos. As always, I hope there were a couple of seconds of clear thinking here that might help you out in some small way. I wouldn't be doing any of this if I still didn't love comic books very much. As always, I look forward to hearing from you.

Keep your nose clean and refrain from picking it.

From the ranch,

Beau Smith

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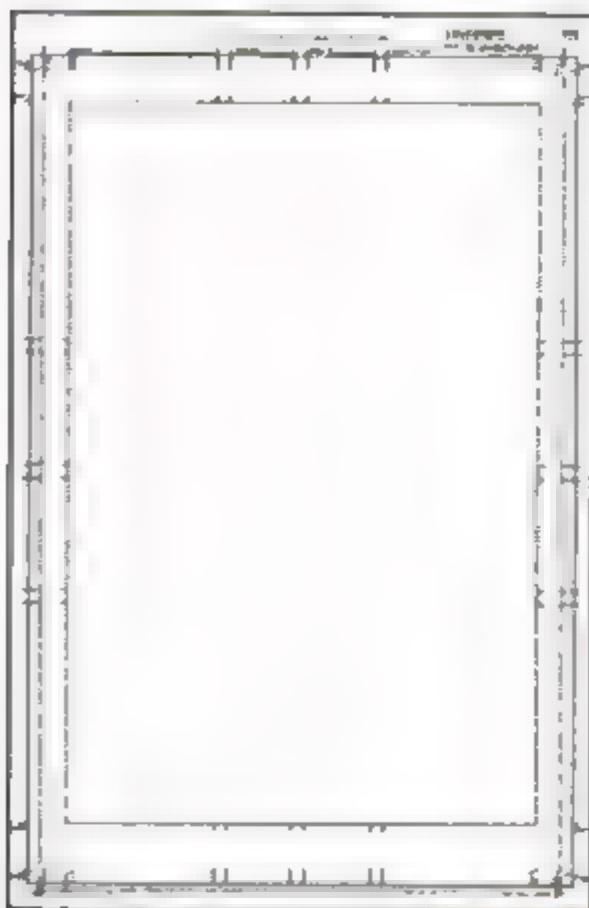
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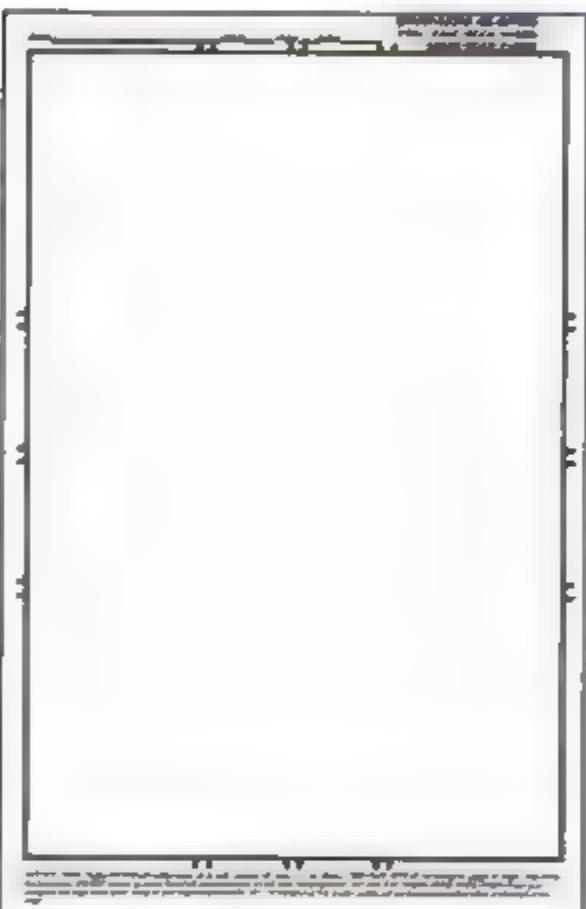
COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS



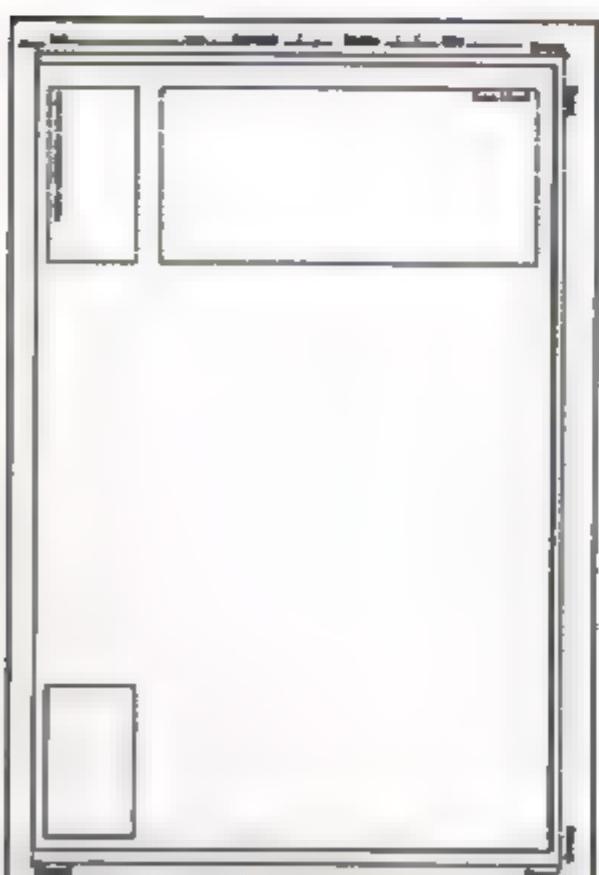
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12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/bagged

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This offering the artist the quality of Pro pages with an advanced page border

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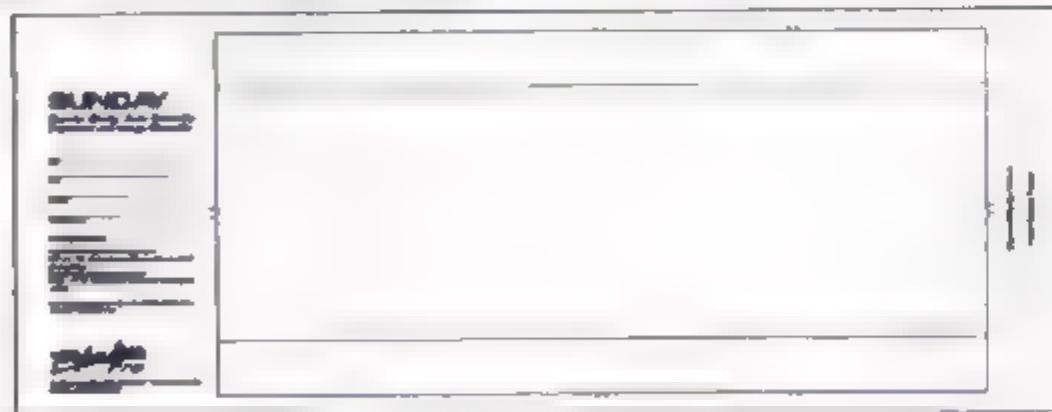


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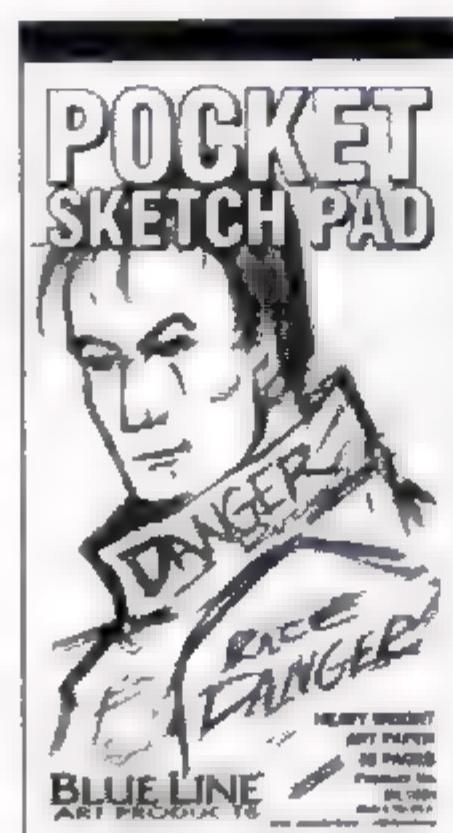
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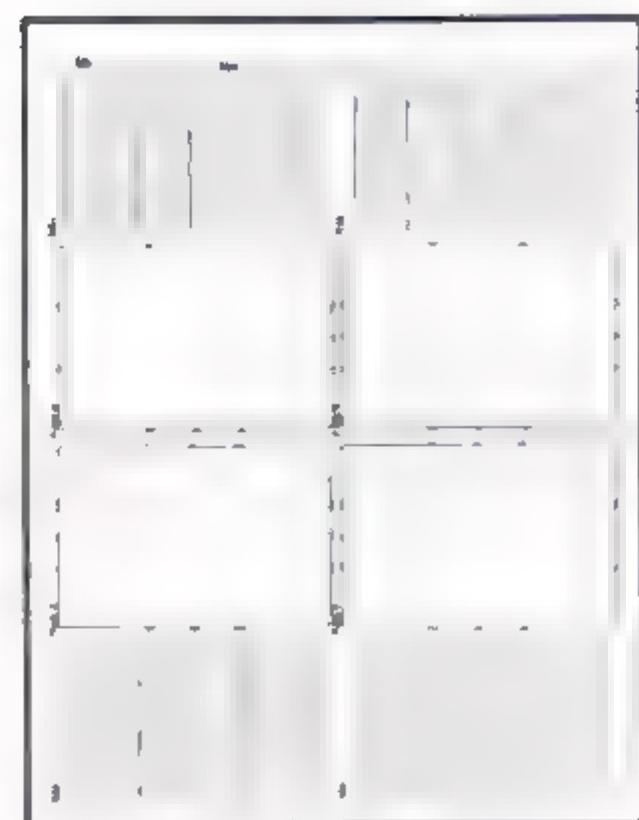
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CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES

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These pages can easily be hole punched and inserted into a binder. A character template is even included for quick and easy character creations!

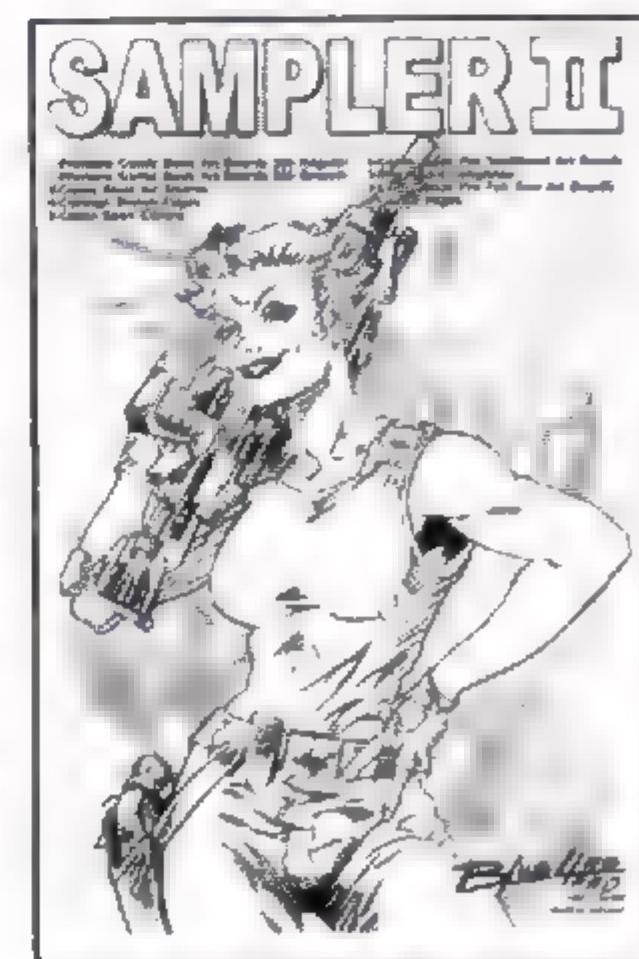
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25 pages of 8 different Blue Line products. 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. 25 pages per pack.



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BLComic font is formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. **BLSFX** is a special effects font with pre-created sound effects that are ready for you to drop into place.

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ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

SERIES 2

DIGITALCARTOON-Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?,.,()[]/*+-

DIGITALCARTOON-Italic

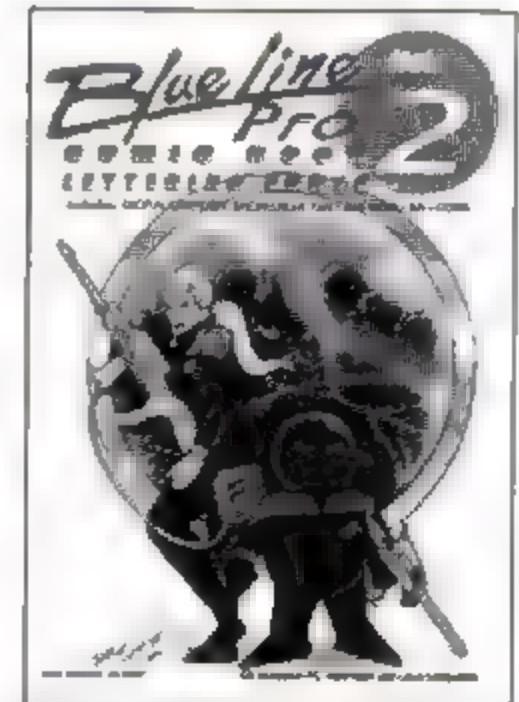
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?,.,()[]/*+-

DIGITALCARTOON-Italic Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?,.,()[]/*+-

DIGITALCARTOON-Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?,.,()[]/*+-



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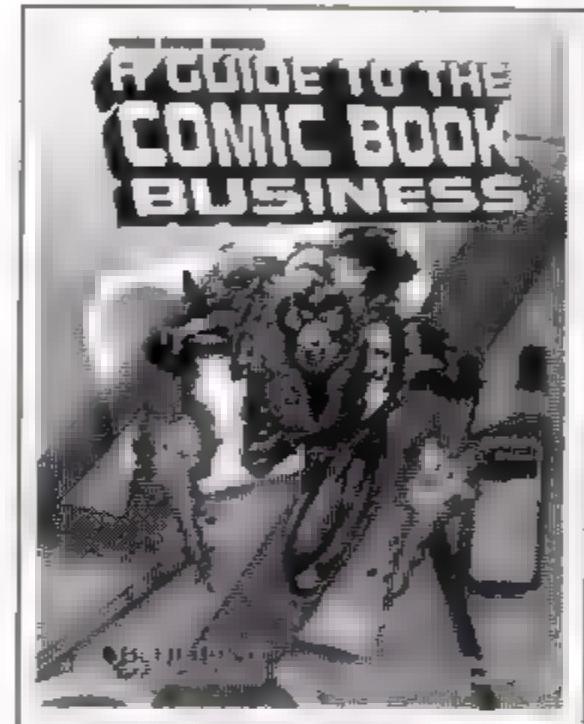
This standard sized hard covered book offers anyone with the ability to pick up a pencil the opportunity to draw. An artist could create their own library of sketches. Great for when you don't want to carry a sketch board around or your just sitting around with your friends. Also a good way to collect artist signatures and sketches at conventions!

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BLUE LINE: A GUIDE TO THE COMIC BOOK BUSINESS

Every fan who reads comics has at one time or another felt the urge to join in on the fun, to take a more active role, to become a player instead of a spectator. In short, to create. You have the desire, now you need a plan.

That's where Blue Line's *A Guide To The Comic Book Business* comes in. It covers all of the basics for starting and maintaining a successful career in the comic book industry. It doesn't matter if your skills lie in pencil or management, this book tells you what to do to turn your hobby into a paid profession.

The first chapter gets you up-to-date on how the industry is set up. It gives you the basic information necessary to be a knowledgeable participant in the comics field. Next how to go about creating your own comics. You'll discover proven methods for making yourself an outstanding candidate. Then, we take a look at other jobs in the industry outside of the creative aspect for all of you wannabe corporate types. Chapter five deals with that small but growing niche of the industry - the small press and self-publisher. We clue you in on effective ways to advertise and promote your work so that you can actually make money off of your talents.

So, for everyone who's ever dreamed of being on the other side of the table at a comic convention, doodled more in class notebooks than actually taking notes, this book is for you.

Written by Daniel Souder. Edited by Bob Hickey

- ITEM# BL1039 SRP \$17.95

90 pages / b&w with full color cover. Spiral bound.



CREATE YOUR OWN COMIC BOOK!

Blue Line has developed a simple and inexpensive step by step to create your very first comic book, that's fun, easy and comprehensive. A box set of Blue Line products that aid a person in making their own comic! It includes 1 Character Template, 6 Concept Sketch Pages, 6 Comic Book Layout Pages, 24 Comic Book Pages, 1 Comic Book Cover Sheet and a 24 page instructional comic book.

- ITEM# BL1002 SRP \$21.95

Box Set. 37 art pages / 24 page b&w instructional comic book / full color die cut box / shrink wrapped.

**INDIA INK**

- Higgins Black India Ink
A non-clogging ink for lettering pens and brushes. Opaque semi-gloss black finish and waterproof.
-AR-4415 Black Ink
(Higgins) 1oz \$3.00
- AR-EF44011 Black Magic Ink (Higgins)
1oz \$3.50
Higgins Waterpoof Black Magic Ink is non-corrosive, tree-flowing, and non-clogging. Great for use on tracing vellum and other film surfaces



- Pelikan Drawing Ink
One of the finest drawing ink available. Pelikan ink is great with technical pens, graphic and fine art papers or tracing cloth.
-AR-PE211882 Black India Ink (Pelikan)
1oz \$4.75
- AR-PE211189 Black India Ink (Pelikan)
8oz \$18.75
- Pelikan "T" Ink
Permanent and completely waterproof. Good with matte-surfaces or waterproof tracing cloth.
-AR-PE221374 Black Ink Pelikan "T" 1oz \$6.00

- KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH INK
Rapidograph Ink. Black, opaque ink for drafting film, paper, and tracing cloth. For use with Koh-I-Noor Rapidograph Pens
-AR-3084-F1 Koh-I-Noor Ink \$3.95



- WHITE OUT
FW. Acrylic Artist Waterproof White Ink
Great for use with technical pens, brushes, and dip pens.
-A-R-FW-011 FW White Acrylic Artist
Ink \$ 5.00

**BRUSHES**

- Winsor/Newton Series 7
Made with Kolinsky sable with traditional black handle. Great brush
-AR-5007001 Winsor/Newton Series 7
Size#1 \$18.95
- AR-5007002 Winsor/Newton Series 7
Size#2 \$22.95
- AR-5007003 Winsor/Newton Series 7
Size#3 \$36.75
- Round Brushes
Made with natural Sable with excellent edges and points for precise strokes.
-AR-NB-38-0 Round Brush Size #0 \$3.00
- AR-NB-38-1 Round Brush Size #1 \$3.25
- AR-NB-38-2 Round Brush Size #2 \$3.95
- AR-058009018 Round Brush Size #3 \$3.95

**PENCILS & QUILL PENS**

- Non-Photo Blue Pencil
Makes marks not appear when artwork is reproduced. Very useful.
-AR-781-5 Non-photo Blue Pencil
\$6.00
- Quill Inking Pen
Quill Pens offers super-fine flexible point. Used by many professional inkers.
-AR-H9432 Quill Inking Pen #102
(Tip & Holder) \$3.25
- AR-H9402 12 Crow Quill #102 Tips
(Inking Pen Nibs only) \$13.95

**ERASERS**

- Kneaded Eraser
Gray soft bendable eraser used for pencil and charcoal
-AR-1224 Kneaded Rubber Eraser Large
\$1.15
- Eraser Pencils
Peel off wrap ideal for detail erasing.
-AR-400 Eraser Pencils \$1.15



- Pentel Click
Pen style holder, retract as needed.
-AR-ZE-21C Pentel Click Eraser/Holder
\$1.95
- AR-ZER-2 Pentel Refill Erasers \$1.75
- Erasing Shield
Metal shield with different sizes and shapes.
-AR-FT-5370 Erasing Shield \$1.10

PENCIL SHARPENER

- Canister Sharpener offers metal blades with high impact plastic container
-AR-MR906 Canister Sharpener \$3.95

ALVIN PENSTIX

- Graphic waterproof drawing pen offering India Ink density. Black permanent drawing ink.
-AR-4013-EEF 0.3mm \$1.55
-AR-4017-F 0.7mm \$1.55
-AR-4015-EF 0.5mm \$1.55
- Penstix Set
Includes all 3 Penstix Sizes
-AR-4033 3mm, 7mm, 5mm \$4.45

- Penstix Drawing/Sketching Markers
Offers maximum India drawing ink like density. Black waterproof permanent ink
-AR-3013-EEF 0.3mm ExEx Fine \$1.55
-AR-3015-EF 0.5mm Ex Fine \$1.55
-AR-3017-F 0.7mm Fine \$1.55
- Penstix Drawing/Sketching Marker Set
Set of all 3 sizes.
-AR-3033 Set of 3 .3, .5, .7 mm \$4.45

- SAKURA PIGMA BRUSH
Archival performance with flexible brush style nib. Very fine lines or broad strokes. Water/chem proof + fade resistant
-AR-XSDK-BR-49 Black \$3.00

ALVIN DRAWING PENMARKERS

- Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/Markers
Permanent waterproof ink that dries instantly. Nibs set in stainless steel sleeves for protection.
-AR-TL01 0.1mm \$1.95
-AR-TL02 0.2mm \$1.95
-AR-TL03 0.3mm \$1.95
-AR-TL04 0.4mm \$1.95
-AR-TL05 0.5mm \$1.95
- Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/Markers Sets
-AR-TLP5 set of 5 (all sizes above) \$9.50
-AR-TLP3 set of 3 (.1, .3, .5mm) \$5.75

**KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH PENS**

- Rapidograph Pens are made of impact and chemical-resistant components for drawing and specialty inks. Good balance and self-polishing stainless steel points.
-AR-3165-06AD Tech Pen Size 6x0 (.13mm) \$27.00
-AR-3165-04AD Tech Pen Size 4x0 (.18mm) \$27.00
-AR-3165-03AD Tech Pen Size 3x0 (.25mm) \$22.00
-AR-3165-02AD Tech Pen Size 2x0 (.3mm) \$22.00
-AR-3165-01AD Tech Pen Size #0 (.35mm) \$22.00
-AR-3165-01 Tech Pen Size #1 (.5mm) \$22.00
-AR-3165-02 Tech Pen Size #2 (.6mm) \$22.00
-AR-3165-03 Tech Pen Size #3 (.8mm) \$22.00
-AR-3165-04 Tech Pen Size #4 (1mm) \$22.00
-AR-3165-06 Tech Pen Size #6 (1.4mm) \$22.00
-AR-3165-07 Tech Pen Size #7 (2mm) \$22.00

Sakura Pigma Micron

- Available in six point sizes. Waterproof, chemical proof and fade resistant and will not smear or feather when dry.
- AR-XSK005-49 20mm, black \$2.95
-AR-XSK01-49 25mm, black \$2.95
-AR-XSK02-49 30mm, black \$2.95
-AR-XSK03-49 35mm, black \$2.95
-AR-XSK05-49 45mm, black \$2.95
-AR-XSK08-49 50mm, black \$2.95
-AR-30061 3-pk , 25, 35, 45mm \$8.00
-AR-30062 All sizes, black \$16.00

MICRON

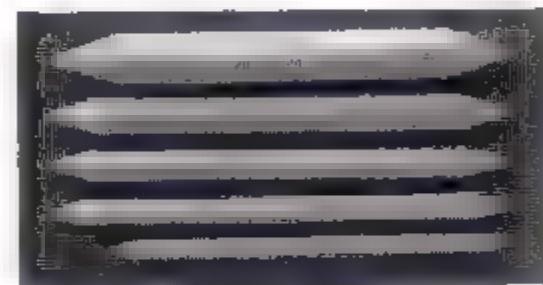
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- Sandpaper Pointer
Ideal for pointing pencils, leads, charcoal and crayons by hand.
-AR-3435-1 Sandpaper Pointer \$9.95

MAGIC RUB

© SANFORD - 1954

Magic-Rub Eraser

- Eraser especially developed for sensitive surfaces, will not mark or smudge
-AR-1954FC-1 Magic-Rub Eraser \$9.95

**Blending Stumps**

- Soft paper felt with double pointed ends used for blending charcoal, pastels, etc.
Use sandpaper to repoint.

- AR-T811-1 1/4" x 5 1/4" \$5.00
-AR-T812-1 5/16" x 6" \$7.50
-AR-T813-1 13/32" x 6" \$1.00
-AR-T814-1 15/32" x 6" \$1.25
-AR-T817-1 5/8" x 6" \$1.50

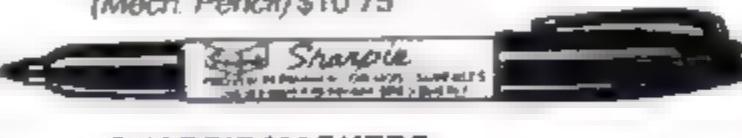
WORKABLE FIXATIF (Krylon)

- Provides lasting protection.
Prevents smudging, dusting and wrinkling.
Workable Fixatif
-AR-KR1306 \$8.95

**Mechanical Pencil**

- Berol Mechanical Pencil is precision made w/button lead release and light aluminum barrel.
- Mechanical Pencil 2mm.
-AR-BP10C \$6.95
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. HB
-AR-BP2375-HB \$10.50
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2H
-AR-BP2375-2H \$10.50
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2B
-AR-SA02263-2B \$10.50
• 12-Non-Photo Blue Leads-2mm.
-AR-BP2376-NPB \$10.50

**SHARPIE MARKERS**

- Provides professional point for standard leads
-AR-BP14C Pencil Sharpener (Mech. Pencil) \$10.75
- 
- SHARPIE MARKERS
Permanent markers with high intensity ink. Quick drying
-AR-SA37101 Ultra Fine Black \$1.30
-AR-SA35101 Extra Fine Black \$1.30
-AR-SA30101 Regular Black \$1.30
-AR-SA33101 Super Sharpie \$1.95

Calligraphic Pen

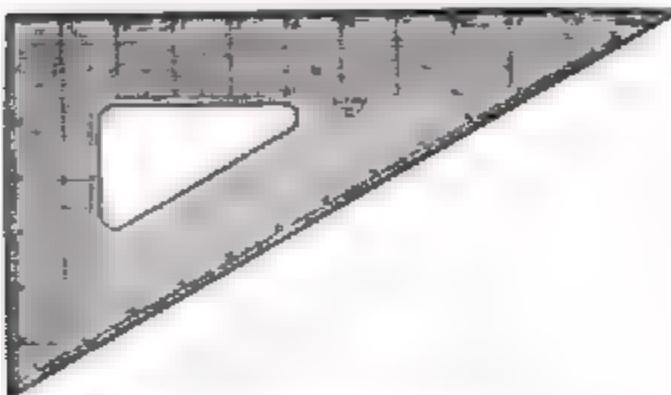
- METALLIC PENS
Offers high quality metallic ink. Great for autographs
-AR-SA46115 Gold Pen \$4.50
-AR-SA46120 Silver Pen \$4.50

CHINA MARKING PENCILS

- Offers moisture resistant, non-toxic odor-free pigments. Self Sharpening. Offered as a dozen or singles.
- AR-173T Dozen Black \$10.75
AR-173T-1 Single Black \$.95
AR-164T Dozen White \$10.75
AR-164T-1 Single White \$.95

T-SQUARES

- Plastic T-squares offering flexible plastic with both metric and standard measurements
 - AR-HX02 Plastic 12" \$3.95
 - AR-NBA18 Plastic 18" \$7.95
 - AR-NBA24 Plastic 24" \$10.95
- Aluminum T-squares offering hard tempered aluminum blade riveted to a rugged plastic head
 - AR-FR63-112 Aluminum 12" \$10.95
 - AR-FR63-118 Aluminum 18" \$12.95
 - AR-FR63-124 Aluminum 24" \$13.95

**TRIANGLES**

High quality triangles made of .080" acrylic. Raised inking edges. Great for inkers.

- 30° x 60° W/ Inking Edge

- AR-1204-60 Triangle 30°x60° 4 inch \$3.50

- AR-1206-60 Triangle 30°x60° 6 inch \$4.50

- AR-1208-60 Triangle 30°x60° 8 inch \$5.50

- AR-1210-60 Triangle 30°x60° 10 inch \$6.50

- AR-1212-60 Triangle 30° x60° 12 inch \$8.50

- AR-1214-60 Triangle 30° x60° 14 inch \$10.50

- 45° X 90° W/ Inking Edge

- AR-1204-45 Triangle 45°x90° 4 inch \$4.50

- AR-1206-45 Triangle 45°x90° 6 inch \$6.50

- AR-1208-45 Triangle 45°x90° 8 inch \$7.50

- AR-1210-45 Triangle 45°x90° 10 inch \$9.50

- AR-1212-45 Triangle 45°x90° 12 inch \$13.50

COMPASS SET

Geometry set includes ruler, compass, two triangles, protractor, eraser, and sharpener

- 8-piece Geometry Set

- AR-HX18807 \$4.95

- 8-Piece Geometry Set (brass compass)

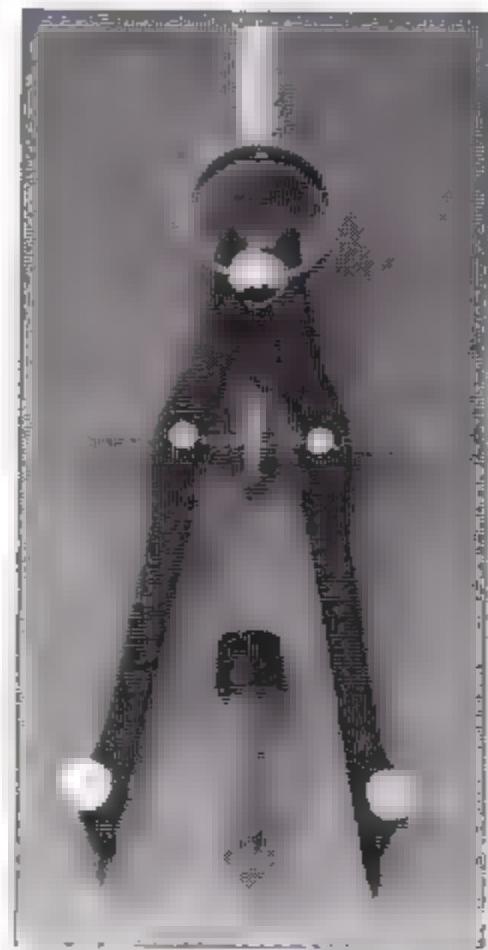
- AR-723405 \$7.95

- Basic Geometry Set

4-piece Geometry Set (Ruler, 12° protractor, 30°/60 + 45°/90 triangles)

- AR-FL03 \$5.95

- **Basic Combination Compass**
6-piece compass set side-screw bow compass, knee joint compass, extension bar, spare leads, 2" divider point and a lead pointer
- AR-S61 Set \$15.95
- **Compass Set**
6-piece drawing set contains: Small side screw compass, 5 1/2" self-centering knee joint compass/divider, extension bar, technical pen adapter, divider point and lead pointer
- ARHLX01330-01330 Set \$16.95

**5" Bow Compass & Divider**

An all metal construction compass with replaceable needle and lead. Makes accurate 8" diameter circles. Extra pivot point for use as a divider.
- AR-494 5" Bow Compass \$4.95

**14 Piece Drafting Kit**

Drafting Kit includes 12" architectural scale, 12x16 vinyl pouch, lettering guide pad, 6" compass, 6" divider, 10° 30/60 triangle, 8" 45/90 triangle, 6" protractor, 8 1/4 french curve, soft pencil eraser, lead holder, mini lead pointer, erasing shield and a three pack of 2.0mm lead.
- AR-BDK-1A 15 Piece Drafting Kit \$38.95

**RULERS**

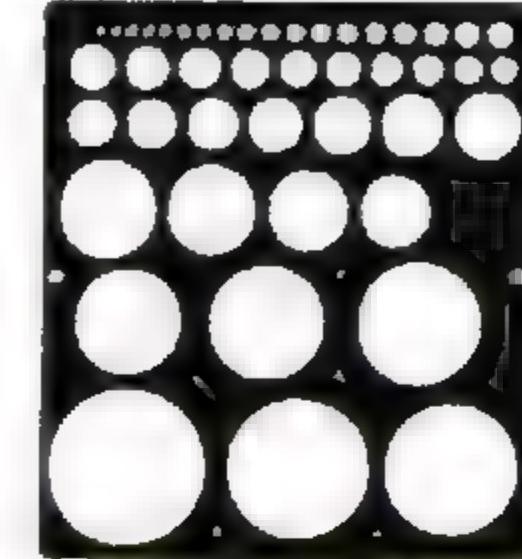
- **Stainless Steel Rulers** offering flexible steel with non-skid cork backing
 - AR-200-12 Steel Ruler 12 inch Cork Backing \$5.95
 - AR-200-18 Steel Ruler 18 inch Cork Backing \$6.95
 - **Plastic Ruler 1 inch with 1/16" markings and metric markings.**
 - AR-C36 Ruler 12" (plastic ruler) \$1.25
 - AR-18 Ruler 6" (plastic ruler) \$1.50

**STORAGE BOXES**

- **Sketch Pac** 2-sided safe storing box 12 3/8" x 4 1/4" x 1 1/4"
 - AR-6880AB \$12.95



- **One Tray Art Bin** 13" x 7 1/4" x 5 1/4"
 - Elevated tray for viewing of supplies in bottom bin. Tight Latch
 - AR-6843AC black \$15.25

**CIRCLE TEMPLATES / FRENCH CURVES / ELLIPSE TEMPLATES**

- **Circle Templates**

Metric and standard. Risers for smear-free drawing. (Great for inkers.)

- Large Circles

- AR-13001 \$7.95

- Extra Large Circles

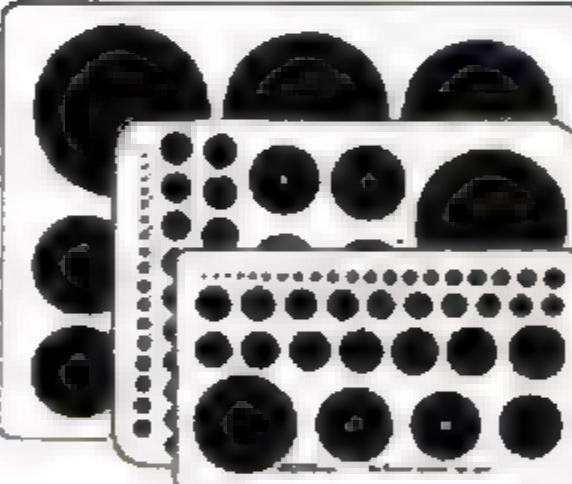
- AR-13011 \$6.95

**FRENCH CURVES (Inking Edge)**

- AR-9000 Set \$6.95

- Ellipse Tempate

- AR-PK12691 \$12.00

**Circle Templates Set of 3**

This set of 3 templates provides ninety-eight different circles and edge scales in 50th 16th and 10th as well as mm and centering lines. Sizes ranging from 1/32 inches to 3 1/2 inches.

- ITEM #AR-TD404 SRP \$17.95

DRAFTSMAN BRUSH

Removes shavings from paper. Cleaning without fear of smudging.

- Draftsman Brush (cleaning paper)

- AR-FT5391 \$6.00

XACTO KNIFE

Rubberized barrel. Rear-release mechanism with safety cap.

- Xacto Knife

- AR-XA3626 \$5.25

Xacto Refill Blades #1

- AR-OLKB \$6.50

**RUBBER CEMENT**

Contact adhesive for paste-up and other graphic art uses.

- Rubber Cement 4oz.

- AR-BT138 \$3.50

- Rubber Cement Quart

- AR-BT102 \$13.25

- Rubber Cement Thinner Pint

- AR-BT201 \$8.50

- Rubber Cement Pick-Up (eraser)

- AR-BT700 \$1.50

**POCKET PORTFOLIO**

- AR-FL419WH Pocket Portfolio 14 x 20 \$10.50

COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART SLEEVES

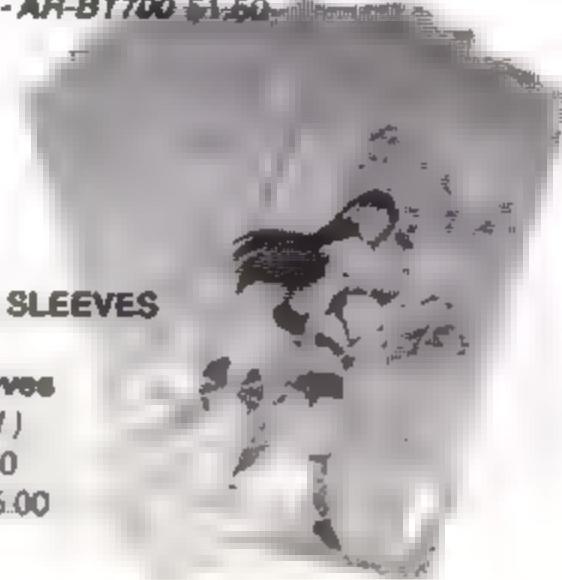
Protect your original Art Work

- Comic Book Original Art Sleeves

11 1/2" x 19" Polyethylene (3.0 mil)

- AR-BAG 1119-25 25 Bags \$7.50

- AR-BAG 1119-100 100 Bag \$25.00

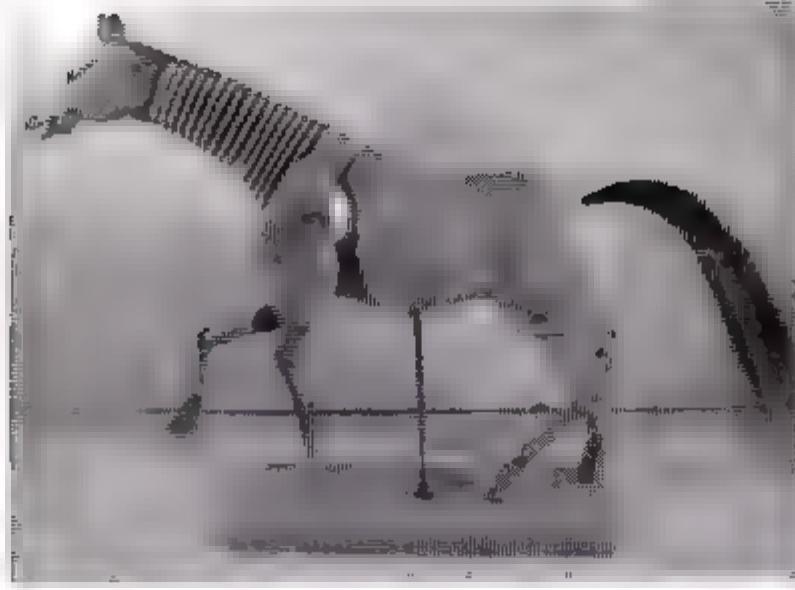




• **12" Unisex Wooden Mannequin**

Human Adult figure mannequin with perfect proportions, adjustable joints for posing. Great for modeling proportions involving angles. Made from carved hardwood, 12" in height.

-AR-CW201 12"
Model
SRP \$19.95



• **12" Horse Wooden Mannequin**

-AR033090410

SRP \$99.00

• **12" Lizard Wooden Mannequin**

-AR056090440

SRP \$17.99



• **Hand Mannequins**

Life-like hardwood hand mannequins are fully articulated. Comes in three sizes male, female and child.

-AR-HM3 14" Male Hand

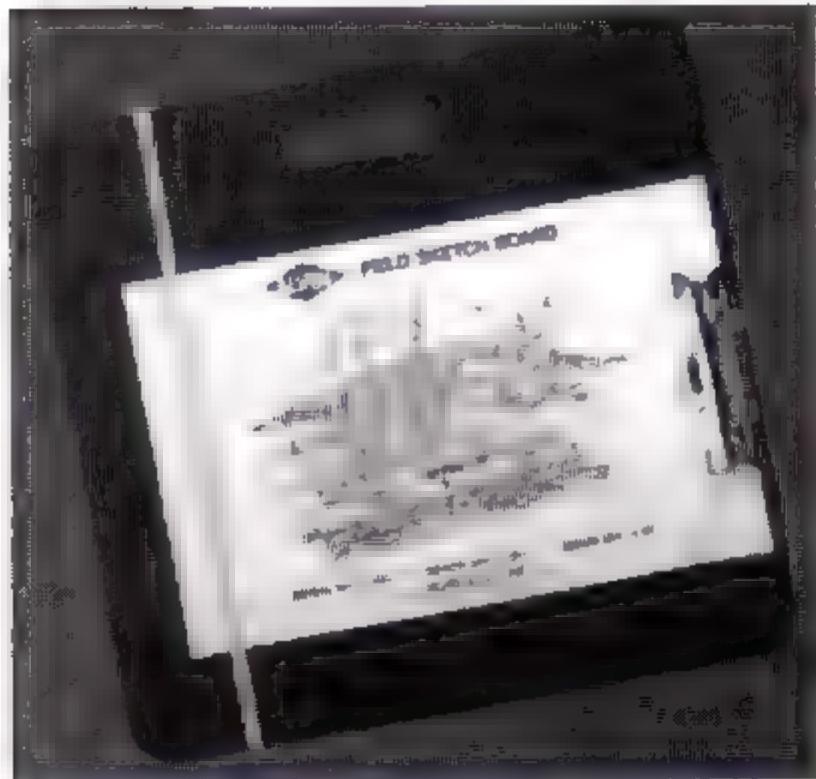
SRP \$49.95

-AR-HM4 12" Female Hand

SRP \$46.95

-AR-HM5 9" Child Hand

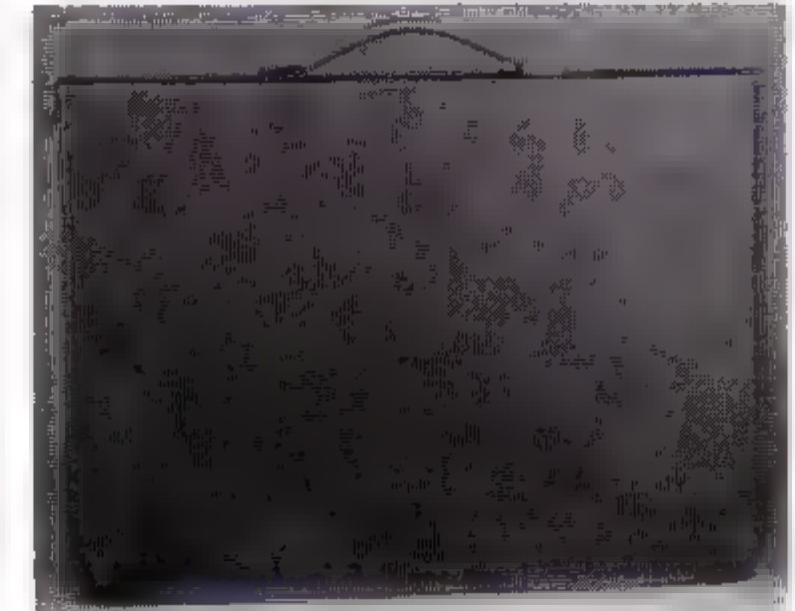
SRP \$42.95



• **LIGHTWEIGHT SKETCH BOARDS**

Made of strong, tempered masonite with cutout carry handle. Metal clips and rubber band (included) hold paper securely in place.

-AR-SB1819 18 1/2" X 19 1/2" SRP \$9.95
-AR-SB2326 23 1/2" X 26" SRP \$12.95



• **PRESENTATION CASES (PORTFOLIO)**

Spine mounted handle allows pages to hang properly to avoid wrinkling. Features 1" black superior quality rings (Does not snag pages). Includes 10 archival pages (#ZX)

-AR-S1-2171 17" x 14"

SRP \$68.95

-AR-S1-2241 24" x 18"

SRP \$110.50

Refill Pages for Presentation Case

-AR-ZX17 17" x 14" 10 pack

SRP \$23.95

-AR-ZX24 24" x 18" 10 pack

SRP \$45.95



• **DISPLAY PORTFOLIOS ARTFOLIOS**

24 pages of acid, pvc, and legnen safe art sleeves.

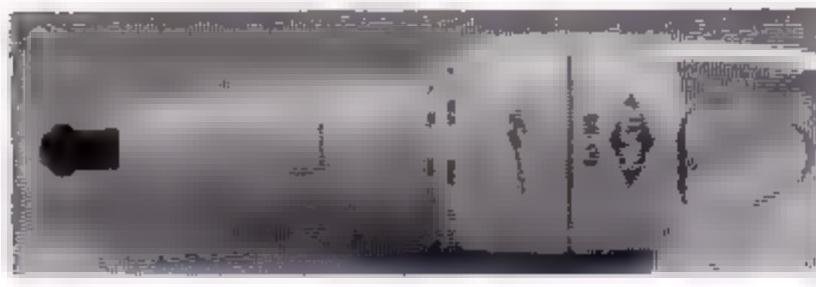
Archival Safe

-AR-IA1212 Artolio Book 11 x 17 w/ 24 shls SRP \$15.95
(Holds Blue Line Comic Book Art Boards)

-AR-IA 1214 Artolio book 14 x 17 w/ 24 shls SRP \$25.95

(Holds most oversized art boards)

-AR-IA 128 Artolio book 8 1/2 x 11 w/ 24 shls SRP \$7.50



• **ALVIN ELECTRIC ERASER**

Durable, high-quality UL-listed unit. Uses a full 7" eraser eliminates the annoyance of stopping constantly during heavy workload periods to insert short erasers. Unbreakable LEXAN casing fits the hand comfortably and can be hung by a convenient ring. The heavy duty AC motor eliminates the continual repair problems of typical lightweight erasers. Motor cooling vent locations are designed to allow cool operation even under heaviest workloads.

-AR-EE1754 With slip-chuck SRP \$85.00

ELECTRIC ERASER and REFILLS

• **KOH-I-NOOR ELECTRIC ERASER**

• **ALL PURPOSE ELECTRIC SYSTEM**

Designed to erase both lead and ink from paper and film. Features a heavy-duty, maintenance free 115v motor, protected by a high-impact white LEXAN case. Maximum efficiency with either the No. 287 white vinyl strip eraser for paper or the specially formulated no. 285 imbibed yellow strip eraser for film. Includes a No. 287 strip eraser

-AR-2800E All purpose Electric System

SRP \$73.95



• **CORDLESS/RECHARGEABLE ERASER**

Contains a trouble-free motor that delivers up to 4,500 rpm, fully charged. Versatile, two-way operation -cordless or AC. Long lasting rechargeable battery, break resistant LEXAN case. Lightweight, portable recharging stand power pack, plus a No. 287 vinyl strip eraser

-AR-2850C Cordless, Rechargeable

SRP \$96.95

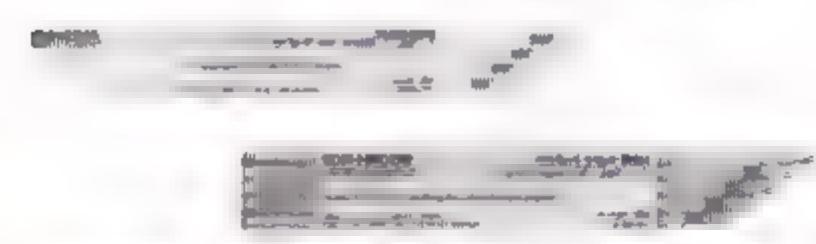
• **KOH-I-NOOR ERASER REFILLS**

-AR-ER285 Yellow, Imbibed, ink 10/box

SRP \$6.95

-AR-ER287 Soft Vinyl, pencils, 10/box

SRP \$5.95



• **ERASER REFILLS**

-AR-ER72 7" dark grey, ink, 1 doz SRP \$6.95
-AR-ER73 7" white, pencil, 1 doz SRP \$6.95
-AR-ER74 7" pink, pencil, 1 doz SRP \$6.95
-AR-ER88 7" white vinyl, ink/pencil, 1 doz. SRP \$6.95



PRISMACOLOR MARKERS AND SETS

- All Colors are available!
- All Singles \$3.30
- Metallic: single nib
- AR-PM117 (Broad) Metallic Silver
- AR-PM118 (Fine) Metallic Silver
- AR-PM119 (Broad) Metallic Gold
- AR-PM120 (Fine) Metallic Gold
- All Metallic Singles \$3.30
- PRISMACOLOR SETS**
- Primary/Secondary 12-Set
Includes AR-PM 50, 19, 15, 57, 6, 4, 32, 44, 53, 31, 61, and 9.
- AR-BP12N \$40.00
- Cool Grey 12-set \$40.00
- AR-BP12P \$40.00
- Warm Grey 12-set \$40.00
- AR-BP12Q \$40.00
- French Grey 12-set \$40.00
- AR-BP12R \$40.00
- Prismacolor 24 set \$79.25
- Prismacolor 48 set \$158.50
- Prismacolor 72 set \$238.00
- Prismacolor 120 set \$394.00
- Prismacolor 144 set \$470.00
- Empty Studio Marker Stacker - AR-STUDIO \$18.00
- Prismacolor 24 set w/hard carrying case - AR-BP24C \$90.00
- Prismacolor 48 set w/hard carrying case - AR-BP48C \$170.00
- All Colors are available!
- AR-PM1 Process Red
- AR-PM4 Crimson Red
- AR-PM5 Scarlet Lake
- AR-PM6 Carmine Red
- AR-PM7 Magenta
- AR-PM8 Pink
- AR-PM10 Blush Pink
- AR-PM11 Deco Pink
- AR-PM12 Light Pink
- AR-PM13 Poppy Red
- AR-PM14 Pale Vermilion
- AR-PM15 Yellowed Orange
- AR-PM16 Orange
- AR-PM17 Sunburst Yellow
- AR-PM18 Yellow Ochre
- AR-PM19 Canary Yellow
- AR-PM21 Tulip Yellow
- AR-PM23 Cream
- AR-PM24 Yellow Chartreuse
- AR-PM25 Spring Green
- AR-PM26 Lt Olive Green
- AR-PM27 Chartreuse
- AR-PM28 Olive Green
- AR-PM31 Dark Green
- AR-PM32 Parrot Green
- AR-PM33 Hunter Green
- AR-PM36 Lime Green
- AR-PM37 Aquamarine
- AR-PM38 Teal Blue
- AR-PM39 True Blue
- AR-PM40 Copenhagen Blue
- AR-PM42 Violet Blue
- AR-PM43 Indigo Blue
- AR-PM44 Ultramarine
- AR-PM45 Navy Blue
- AR-PM46 Light Aqua
- AR-PM47 Non-photo Blue
- AR-PM48 Lt Cerulean Blue
- AR-PM50 Violet
- AR-PM51 Black Grape
- AR-PM53 Mulberry
- AR-PM55 Rhodamine
- AR-PM58 Lavender
- AR-PM60 Violet Mist
- AR-PM61 Dark Umber
- AR-PM62 Sepia
- AR-PM65 Sienna Brown
- AR-PM69 Goldenrod
- AR-PM70 Sand
- AR-PM71 Buff
- AR-PM72 Eggshell
- AR-PM73 Flagstone Red

- AR-PM78 Brick Beige
- AR-PM79 Brick White
- AR-PM80 Putty
- AR-PM82 Terra Cotta
- AR-PM88 Cherry
- AR-PM89 Dark Brown
- AR-PM90 Light Walnut
- AR-PM90 Walnut
- AR-PM93 Burnt Ochre
- AR-PM95 Light Tan
- AR-PM96 Blond Wood
- AR-PM97 Warm Black
- AR-PM98 Black
- AR-PM99 Warm Grey 10%
- AR-PM100 Warm Grey 20%
- AR-PM101 Warm Grey 30%
- AR-PM102 Warm Grey 40%
- AR-PM103 Warm Grey 50%
- AR-PM104 Warm Grey 60%
- AR-PM105 Warm Grey 70%
- AR-PM106 Warm Grey 80%
- AR-PM107 Warm Grey 90%
- AR-PM108 Cool Grey 10%
- AR-PM109 Cool Grey 20%
- AR-PM110 Cool Grey 30%
- AR-PM111 Cool Grey 40%
- AR-PM112 Cool Grey 50%
- AR-PM113 Cool Grey 60%
- AR-PM114 Cool Grey 70%
- AR-PM115 Cool Grey 80%
- AR-PM116 Cool Grey 90%
- AR-PM122 Salmon Pink
- AR-PM123 Spanish Orange
- AR-PM124 Limepool
- AR-PM125 Peacock Blue
- AR-PM126 Cerulean Blue
- AR-PM127 Imperial Violet
- AR-PM128 Panna Violet
- AR-PM129 Dahlia Purple
- AR-PM130 Deco Orange
- AR-PM131 Deco Yellow
- AR-PM132 Jasmine
- AR-PM133 Deco Pink
- AR-PM134 Deco Blue
- AR-PM135 Deco Green
- AR-PM136 Deco Aqua
- AR-PM137 Clay Rose
- AR-PM138 Pink Rose
- AR-PM140 Celadon Green
- AR-PM141 Jade Green
- AR-PM142 Brittany Blue
- AR-PM143 Mediterranean Blue
- AR-PM144 Cloud Blue
- AR-PM145 Blue slate
- AR-PM146 Periwinkle
- AR-PM147 Greyed Lavender
- AR-PM148 Cornflower
- AR-PM149 Bronze
- AR-PM150 Mahogany Red
- AR-PM151 Raspberry
- AR-PM152 Henna
- AR-PM153 Pumpkin Orange
- AR-PM154 Mineral Orange
- AR-PM155 French Grey 10%
- AR-PM156 French Grey 20%
- AR-PM157 French Grey 30%
- AR-PM158 French Grey 40%
- AR-PM159 French Grey 50%
- AR-PM160 French Grey 60%
- AR-PM161 French Grey 70%
- AR-PM162 French Grey 80%
- AR-PM163 French Grey 90%
- AR-PM164 Peacock Green
- AR-PM165 Grass Green
- AR-PM166 True Green
- AR-PM167 Apple Green
- AR-PM168 Dark Purple
- AR-PM169 Tuscan Red
- AR-PM170 Peach
- AR-PM171 Lilac
- AR-PM172 Light Umber
- AR-PM173 Light Violet
- AR-PM184 Forest Green
- AR-PM185 Spruce
- AR-PM186 Emerald
- AR-PM187 Leaf Green
- AR-PM190 Tangerine
- All Single Markers \$3.30



• Prismacolor Singles

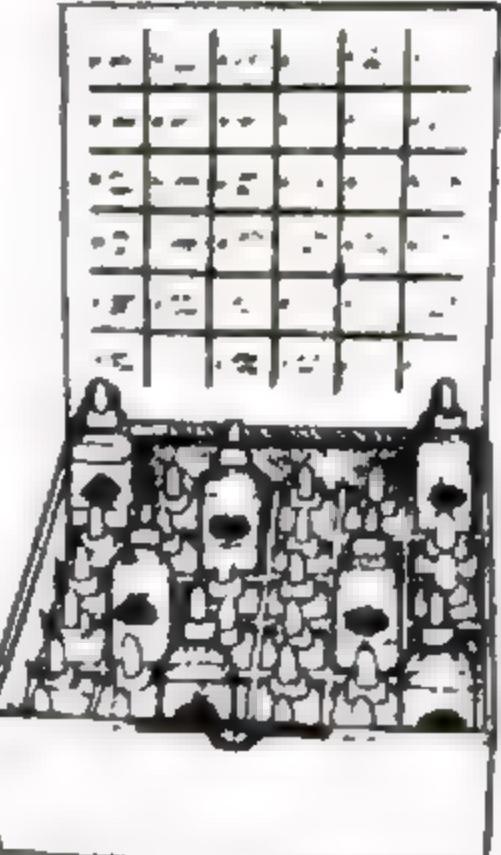
Unique four in one design creates four line widths from one double-ended marker. Extra broad nibs imitates paint brush stroke while fine and thin nibs achieve gentle refined strokes.



• Prismacolor Art Pencil Sets

Professional Art Pencil Sets Soft lead, permanent pigments, blendable Water and smear resistant. No eraser

- 12 Color Pencil Set - ARSAN03596 \$13.95
- 24 Color Pencil Set - ARSAN03597 \$26.95
- 48 Color Pencil Set - ARSAN03598 \$51.95
- 72 Color Pencil Set - ARSAN03599 \$76.95
- 96 Color Pencil Set - ARSAN03601 \$101.95
- 120 Color Pencil Set - ARSAN03602 \$127.95



You must purchase a minimum of 12 single marker each time you order.

Dr. Martin Watercolors

- Radiant Concentrated Watercolors

Dr. Martin's

Extremely concentrated watercolors. Giving great brilliance and radiant tones in illustrations. They may be diluted with water and blend freely. Radiant colors are less transparent than synchronic colors. In 5 oz dropper top bottles. SRP \$3.95 each



- #ARDRD "D" set includes Coffee Brown, Fuchsia, Ice Blue, Ice Green, Indian Yellow, Irish Blue, Peacock Blue, Raspberry, Sunrise Pink, Sunset Orange, Sunset Red, Sunshine Yellow, Tahiti Red, Tiger Yellow. SRP \$55.20

- Synchronic Transparent Watercolors Dr. Martin Synchronic colors are easy to handle and give ultimate transparency. They may be diluted with water. 5 oz Dropper top bottles. SRP \$3.95

- | | |
|---------|-----------------|
| ARDR1A | Alpine Rose |
| ARDR1B | Amber Yellow |
| ARDR1C | Antelope Brow |
| ARDR2B | Apple Green |
| ARDR14A | Black |
| ARDR31C | Burnt Orange |
| ARDR41C | Calypso Green |
| ARDR34C | Chartreuse |
| ARDR6A | Cherry Red |
| ARDR56D | Coffee Brown |
| ARDR18B | Crimson |
| ARDR20B | Cyclamen |
| ARDR15B | Daffodil Yellow |
| ARDR48D | Fuchsia |
| ARDR26B | Golden Brown |
| ARDH11A | Grass Green |
| ARDR32C | Hyacinth Blue |
| ARDR51D | Ice Blue |
| ARDR50D | Ice Green |
| ARDR37C | Ice Pink |
| ARDR40C | Ice Yellow |
| ARDR54D | Indian Yellow |
| ARDR53D | Irish Blue |
| ARDR35C | Jungle Green |
| ARDR12A | Juniper Green |
| ARDR1A | Lemon Yellow |
| ARDR27B | Mahogany |
| ARDR24B | Moss Green |
| ARDR7A | Moss Rose |
| ARDR33C | Norway Blue |
| ARDR25B | Olive Green |
| ARDR2A | Orange |
| ARDR52D | Peacock Blue |
| ARDR3A | Persimmon |
| ARDR30C | Pumpkin |
| ARDR49D | Raspberry |
| ARDR13A | Saddle Brown |
| ARDR5A | Scarlet |
| ARDR28B | Sepia |
| ARDR22B | Slate Blue |
| ARDR46D | Sunrise Pink |
| ARDR44D | Sunset Orange |
| ARDR45D | Sunset Red |
| ARDR43D | Sunshine Yellow |
| ARDR47D | Tahiti Red |
| ARDR17B | Tangerine |
| ARDH29C | Tapestry |
| ARDR55D | Tiger Yellow |
| ARDH36C | Tobacco Brown |
| ARDR38C | Tropic Gold |
| ARDR39C | Tropic Pink |
| ARDR9A | True Blue |
| ARDR8A | Turquoise Blue |
| ARDR21B | Ultra Blue |
| ARDR10A | Violet |
| ARDR19B | Wild Rose |

- Radiant Concentrated Sets Dr. Martin

Each set is comprised of 14 colors to cover the entire range of radiant colors. 5 oz bottles.

- #ARDRA "A" set includes Alpine Rose, Black, Cherry Red, Grass Green, Juniper Green, Lemon Yellow, Moss Rose, Orange, Persimmon, Saddle Brown, Scarlet, True Blue, Turquoise Blue, Violet. SRP \$55.20 per set.

- #ARDRB "B" set includes Amber Yellow, Apple Green, Crimson, Cyclamen, Daffodil Yellow, Golden Brown, Mahogany, Moss Green, Olive Green, Sepia, State Blue, Tangerine, Ultra Blue, Wild Rose. SRP \$113.50

- Synchronic Transparent Art Small Set

- #ARDRC "C" set includes Antelope Brown, Burnt Orange, Calypso Green, Chartreuse, Hyacinth Blue, Ice Pink, Ice Yellow, Jungle Green, Norway Blue, Pumpkin, Tapestry, Tobacco Brown, Tropic Gold, Tropic Pink. SRP \$55.20



You must purchase a minimum of 12 single dyes each time you order.

COPIC MARKERS, AIR MARKERS, TONES, REFILLS

COPIC Markers have been widely used in Europe and Asia where their coloring qualities go hand in hand with the style we know as manga. Their versatility and variety lends itself to the imagination of the creator and gives him or her options for their creative style. The standard square designed COPIC marker is double ended and fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

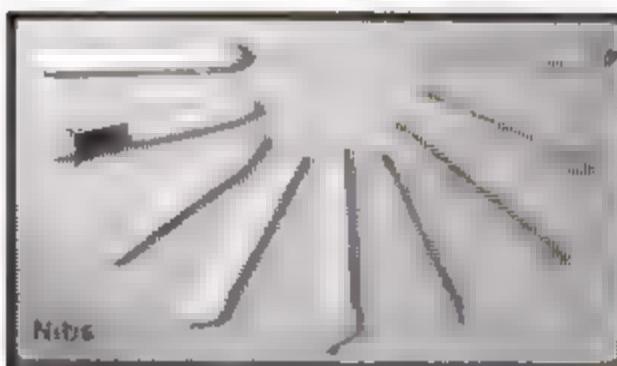
• Single Copic Markers	100R37	Carmine	200B01	Mint Blue	200L00	Skin White	200N0	Neutral Gray
\$4.95 each	100R39	Garnet	200B02	Robin's Egg Blue	200F00	Pink Froot Pink	200N1	Neutral Gray 1
100B45 Smokey Blue	100R59	Cardinal	200B04	Tahitian Blue	200L01	Pink Flamingo	200N10	Neutral Gray 10
100BG02 New Blue	100RV02	Sugared Almond Pink	200B05	Process Blue	200F02	Fruit Pink	200N2	Neutral Gray 2
100BG05 Holiday Blue	100RV04	Shock Pink	200B06	Peacock Blue	200L04	Lipstick Natural	200N3	Neutral Gray 3
100BG09 Blue Green	100RV06	Cense	200B12	Ice Blue	200E07	Light Mahogany	200N4	Neutral Gray 4
100BG10 Cool Shadow	100RV09	Fuchsia	200B14	Light Blue	200E08	Brown	200N5	Neutral Gray 5
100BG11 Moon White	100HV10	Pale Pink	200B16	Cyanine Blue	200E09	Burnt Sienna	200N6	Neutral Gray 6
100BG13 Mint Green	100RV11	Pink	200B18	Lapis Lazuli	200E11	Bareley Beige	200N7	Neutral Gray 7
100BG15 Aqua	100RV13	Tender Pink	200B21	Baby Blue	200E13	Light Suntan	200N8	Neutral Gray 8
100BG18 Teal Blue	100RV14	Begonia Pink	200B23	Phthalo Blue	200E15	Dark Suntan	200N9	Neutral Gray 9
100BG32 Aquamarine	100RV17	Deep Magenta	200B24	Sky	200E19	Redwood	200R00	Peach White
100BG34 Horizon Green	100RV19	Red Viola	200B26	Cobalt Blue	200E21	Baby Skin Pink	200R02	Flesh
100BG45 Nile Blue	100HV21	Light Pink	200B28	Royal Blue	200E25	Caribe Cocoa	200R05	Salmon Red
100BG49 Duck Blue	100RV25	Dog Rose Flower	200B29	Ultramarine	200E27	Africano	200R08	Vermilion
100BG99 Fragstone Blue	100HV29	Crimson	200B32	Pale Blue	200E29	Burnt Umber	200H11	Pale Cherry White
100BV00 Mauve Shadow	100RV32	Shadow Pink	200B34	Manganese Blue	200E31	Brick Beige	200R12	Light Rose Tea
100BV04 Blue Berry	100RV34	Dark Pink	200B37	Antwerp Blue	200E33	Sand	200H14	Light House
100BV08 Blue Violet	100T0	Toner Gray 0	200B39	Prussian Blue	200E34	Oriente	200R17	Lipstick Orange
100BV23 Grayish Lavender	100T1	Toner Gray 1	200B41	Powder Blue	200E35	Chamois	200H20	Blush
100BV31 Pale Lavender	100T10	Toner Gray 10	200B45	Smoky Blue	200E37	Sepia	200R22	Light Prawn
100C0 Cool Gray 0	100T2	Toner Gray 2	200B52	Soft Greenish Blue	200E39	Leather	200R24	Prawn
100C1 Cool Gray 1	100T3	Toner Gray 3	200B60	Pale Blue Grey	200E40	Brick White	200R27	Cadmium Red
100C10 Cool Gray 10	100T4	Toner Gray 4	200B63	Light Hydrangea	200E41	Pearl White	200R29	Lipstick Red
100C2 Cool Gray 2	100T5	Toner Gray 5	200B79	Iris	200E43	Dull Ivory	200R30	Pale Yellowish Pink
100C3 Cool Gray 3	100T6	Toner Gray 6	200B91	Pale Grayish Blue	200E44	Clay	200R32	Peach
100C4 Cool Gray 4	100T7	Toner Gray 7	200B93	Light Crockery Blue	200E47	Dark Brown	200R35	Coral
100C5 Cool Gray 5	100T8	Toner Gray 8	200B95	Light Grayish Cobalt	200E49	Dark Bark	200R37	Carmine
100C6 Cool Gray 6	100T9	Toner Gray 9	200B97	Night Blue	200E50	Egg Shell	200R39	Garrel
100C7 Cool Gray 7	100V04	Lilac	200B99	Agate	200E51	Milky White	200R43	Bougainvillaea
100C8 Cool Gray 8	100V06	Lavender	200BG01	Aqua Blue	200E53	Raw Silk	200R46	Strong Red
100C9 Cool Gray 9	100V09	Violet	200BG02	New Blue	200E55	Light Camel	200R49	Cardinal
100E00 Skin White	100V12	Pale Lilac	200BG05	Holiday Blue	200E57	Light Walnut	200RV02	Sugared Almond Pink
100E02 Fruity Pink	100V15	Mallow	200BG07	Petroleum Blue	200E59	Walnut	200RV04	Shock Pink
100E04 Lipstick Natural	100V17	Amethyst	200BG09	Blue Green	200E71	Champagne	200RV06	Cerise
100E07 Light Mahogany	100W0	Warm Gray 0	200BG10	Cool Shadow	200E74	Cocoa Brown	200RV09	Fuchsia
100E09 Burnt Sienna	100W1	Warm Gray 1	200BG11	Moon White	200E77	Maroon	200RV10	Pale Pink
100E11 Bareley Beige	100W10	Warm Gray 10	200BG13	Mini Green	200E79	Cashew	200RV11	Pink
100E13 Light Suntan	100W2	Warm Gray 2	200BG15	Aqua	200F93	Tea Rose	200RV13	Tender Pink
100E15 Dark Suntan	100W3	Warm Gray 3	200BG18	Teal Blue	200E95	Flesh Pink	200RV14	Begonia Pink
100E19 Redwood	100W4	Warm Gray 4	200BG23	Coral Sea	200E97	Deep Orange	200RV17	Deep Magenta
100E21 Baby Skin Pink	100W5	Warm Gray 5	200BG32	Aqua Mint	200E99	Baked Clay	200RV19	Red Violet
100E25 Caribe Cocoa	100W6	Warm Gray 6	200BG34	Horizon Green	200FB2	Fluorescent Dull Blue	200RV21	Light Pink
100E27 Africano	100W7	Warm Gray 7	200BG45	Nile Blue	200FBG2	Fluorescent Dull Blue Green	200RV23	Pure Pink
100E29 Burnt Umber	100W8	Warm Gray 8	200BG49	Duck Blue	200T0	Toner Gray		
100E31 Brick Beige	100W9	Warm Gray 9	200BG93	Green Gray	200T1	Toner Gray 1		
100E33 Sand	100Y00	Banum Yellow	200BG96	Bush	200T10	Toner Gray 10		
100E34 Orientale	100Y02	Canary Yellow	200BG99	Flagstone Blue	200T12	Toner Gray 2		
100E35 Chamois	100Y06	Yellow	200BV00	Mauve Shadow	200T3	Toner Gray 3		
100E37 Sepia	100Y08	Acid Yellow	200BV000	Iridescent Mauve	200FYG2	Toner Gray 4		
100E39 Leather	100Y11	Pale Yellow	200BV02	Prune	200T5	Toner Gray 5		
100F40 Brick White	100Y13	Lemon Yellow	200BV04	Blue Berry	200T6	Toner Gray 6		
100F41 Pearl White	100Y15	Cadmium Yellow	200BV08	Blue Violet	200G00	Jade Green		
100F43 Dull Ivory	100Y17	Golden Yellow	200BV11	Soft Violet	200G02	Spectrum Green		
100F44 Clay	100Y19	Napoli Yellow	200BV13	Hydrangea Blue	200G05	Emerald Green		
100F49 Dark Bark	100Y21	Buttercup Yellow	200BV17	Deep Reddish Blue	200G07	Nile Green		
100E51 Milky White	100Y23	Yellowish Beige	200BV20	Dull Lavender	200G09	Veronese Green		
100E53 Raw Silk	100Y26	Mustard	200BV23	Grayish Lavender	200G12	Sea Green		
100E55 Light Camel	100Y38	Honey	200BV25	Grayish Violet	200G14	Apple Green		
100E57 Light Walnut	100YG01	Green Bice	200BV29	Stale	200G16	Malachite		
100E59 Walnut	100YG03	Yellow Green	200BV31	Pale Lavender	200G17	Forest Green		
100E77 Maroon	100YG05	Salad	200C0	Cool Gray	200G19	Bright Parrot Green		
100G00 Jade Green	100YG07	Acid Green	200C1	Cool Gray 1	200G20	Wax White		
100G02 Spectrum Green	100YG09	Lettuce Green	200C10	Cool Gray 10	200G21	Lime Green		
100G05 Emerald Green	100YG11	Mignonette	200C2	Cool Gray 2	200G24	Willow		
100G07 Nile Green	100YG13	Chartreuse	200C3	Cool Gray 3	200G28	Ocean Green		
100G09 Veronese Green	100YG17	Grass Green	200C4	Cool Gray 4	200G29	Pine Tree Green		
100G12 Sea Green	100YG21	Anise	200C5	Cool Gray 5	200G40	Dim Green		
100G14 Apple Green	100YG23	New Leaf	200C6	Cool Gray 6	200G82	Spring Dim Green		
100G16 Malachite	100YG25	Celadon Green	200C7	Cool Gray 7	200G85	Verdigris		
100G17 Forest Green	100YG41	Pale Green	200C8	Cool Gray 8	200G94	Grayish Olive		
100G19 Bright Parrot Green	100YG45	Cobalt Green	200C9	Cool Gray 9	200G99	Olive		
100G20 Wax White	100YG63	Pea Green						
100G21 Lime Green	100YG67	Moss						
100G24 Willow	100YG81	Putty						
100G28 Ocean Green	100YG95	Pale Olive						
100G29 Pine Tree Green	100YG97	Spanish Olive						
100G40 Dim Green	100YG99	Marine Green						
100G82 Spring Dim Green	100YR00	Powder Pink						
100G85 Verdigris	100YR02	Light Orange						
100G99 Olive	100YR04	Chrome Orange						
100N0 Neutral Gray 0	100YR07	Cadmium Orange						
100N1 Neutral Gray 1	100YR09	Chinese Orange						
100N10 Neutral Gray 10	100YR14	Caramel						
100N2 Neutral Gray 2	100YR16	Apricot						
100N3 Neutral Gray 3	100YR18	Sanguine						
100N4 Neutral Gray 4	100YR21	Creme						
100N5 Neutral Gray 5	100YR23	Yellow Ochre						
100N6 Neutral Gray 6	100YR24	Pale Sepia						
100N7 Neutral Gray 7	110 COPIC 12 Basic	\$59.40						
100N8 Neutral Gray 8	112 COPIC 12 PCS NG	\$59.40						
100N9 Neutral Gray 9	114 COPIC 12 PCS TG	\$59.40						
100R00 Pinkish White	116 COPIC 12 PCS WG	\$59.40</						

200YG23 New Leaf
 200YG25 Celadon Green
 200YG41 Pale Green
 200YQ45 Cobalt Green
 200YG63 Pea Green
 200YG67 Moss
 200YG91 Putty
 200YG93 Grayish Yellow
 200YG95 Pale Olive
 200YG97 Spanish Olive
 200YG99 Marine Green
 200YR00 Powder Pink
 200YR000 Silk
 200YR02 Light Orange
 200YR04 Chrome Orange
 200YR07 Cadmium Orange
 200YR09 Chinese Orange
 200YR14 Caramel
 200YR16 Apricot
 200YR18 Sanguine
 200YR20 Yellowish Shade
 200YR21 Cream
 200YR23 Yellow Ochre
 200YR24 Pale Sepia
 200YR31 Light Reddish Yellow
 200YR61 Yellowish Skin Pink
 200YR65 Atoll
 200YR68 Orange



Colorless Blender

210 Various Ink Colorless Blender \$3.75
 220 Various Colorless Blender 200c \$9.75
 230 Various Ink Empty Bottle \$2.65



• Replaceable Marker Nibs \$4.20

Another great feature about COPIC markers is their interchangeable nibs. From broad to calligraphy, provide greater freedom of technique in your renderings. COPIC Nibs deliver clear vibrant color on photocopied surfaces as well as glass, plastics and metals. The nibs are made of strong but flexible polyester for smooth consistent application. Nibs come in a pack of 10 except for the brush variety that comes in a pack of 3.

300 Standard Broad
 310 Soft Broad
 320 Round
 330 Calligraphy 5mm
 340 Brush
 350 Standard Fine
 360 Super Fine
 370 Semi Broad
 380 Calligraphy 3mm
 385 Sketch Nib Super Brush
 390 Sketch Nib Medium Broad



400 Copic Tweezer \$4.20

Our special COPIC Tweezers give you an easy no-meas nib change that gets you drawing again in minutes. Being able to change nibs quickly helps you keep up with the most demanding marker techniques.

• COPIC SKETCH MARKERS

The oval designed Sketch COPIC marker is double ended and is fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblended color. COPIC Sketch markers oval body profile gives you a feel of a fast flowing experience in your

hands. It paints as well as it draws. They come with a broad nib and a brush like nib available in medium + broad and super brush making them great for delicate or bold expression (from fashion and graphics to textiles and fine arts lettering/calligraphy). COPIC sketch markers are available in 286 colors. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

450 Colorless Blender \$4.20
 45100 Black \$4.20
 45110 Special Black \$4.20
 452 Sketch 12 Basic Set \$59.40
 454 Sketch 36 Basic Set \$178.20
 456 Sketch 72 set A \$356.40
 458 Sketch 72 Set B \$356.40

• Single COPIC SKETCH Markers \$4.95

45B00 Frost Blue
 45B000 Pale Porcelain Blue
 45B01 Mint Blue
 45B02 Robins Egg Blue
 45B04 Tahitian Blue
 45B05 Process Blue
 45B06 Peacock Blue
 45B12 Ice Blue
 45B14 Light Blue
 45B16 Cyanine \$4.95
 45B18 Lapis Lazuli
 45B21 Baby Blue
 45B23 Phthalo Blue
 45B24 Sky
 45B26 Cobalt Blue
 45B28 Royal Blue
 45B29 Ultra Marine
 45B32 Pale Blue
 45B34 Manganese Blue
 45B37 Anwerp Blue
 45B39 Prussian Blue
 45B45 Powder Blue
 45B52 Soft Greenish Blue
 45B60 Pale Blue Gray
 45B63 Light Hydrangea
 45B79 Iris
 45B91 Pale Grayish Blue
 45B93 Light Crockery Blue
 45B95 Light Grayish Cobalt
 45B97 Night Blue
 45B98 Agate
 45BG01 Aqua Blue
 45BG02 New Blue
 45BG05 Holiday Blue
 45BG07 Petroleum Blue
 45BG09 Blue Green
 45BG10 Cool Shadow
 45BG11 Moon White
 45BG13 Mint Green
 45BG15 Aqua
 45BG18 Teal Blue
 45BG23 Coral Sea
 45BG32 Aqua Mint
 45BG34 Horizon Green
 45BG45 Nile Blue
 45BG48 Duck Blue
 45BG93 Green
 45BG96 Bush
 45BV00 Fragstone Blue
 45BV000 Indescent Mauve
 45BV02 Prune
 45BV04 Blue Berry
 45BV08 Blue Violet
 45BV11 Soft-Violet
 45BV13 Hydrangea Blue
 45BV17 Deep Reddish Blue
 45BV20 Dull Lavender
 45BV23 Grayish Lavender
 45BV25 Grayish Violet
 45BV29 State
 45BV31 Pale Lavender
 45C0 Cool Gray 0
 45C1 Cool Gray 1
 45C10 Cool Gray 10
 45C2 Cool Gray 2
 45C3 Cool Gray 3
 45C4 Cool Gray 4
 45C5 Cool Gray 5
 45C6 Cool Gray 6
 45C7 Cool Gray 7
 45C8 Cool Gray 8
 45C9 Cool Gray 9
 45E00 Skin White
 45E000 Pale Fruit Pink
 45E01 Pink Flamingo
 45E02 Fruit Pink
 45E04 Lipstick Natural
 45E07 Light Mahogany
 45E08 Brown
 45E09 Burnt Sienna
 45E11 Barely Beige
 45E13 Light Suntan
 45E15 Dark Suntan
 45E19 Redwood
 45E21 Baby Skin Pink
 45E25 Canbe Cocos

45E27 Africano
 45E28 Burnt Umber
 45E31 Brick Beige
 45E33 Sand
 45E34 Orientale
 45E35 Chamois
 45E37 Sepia
 45F39 Leather
 45E40 Brick White
 45E41 Pearl White
 45E43 Dull Ivory
 45E44 Clay
 45E47 Dark Brown
 45F49 Dark Bark
 45E50 Eggshell
 45F51 Milky White
 45E53 Raw Silk
 45E55 Light Came
 45E57 Light Walnut
 45E59 Walnut
 45E71 Champagne
 45E74 Cocoa Brown
 45E77 Maroon
 45E79 Cashew
 45E93 Tea Rose
 45E95 Flesh Pink
 45F97 Deep Orange
 45E99 Baked Clay
 45FB2 Fluorescent Dull Blue
 45FBG2 Fluorescent Dull Blue
 45FRV1 Fluorescent Pink
 45FV2 Fluorescent Dull Violet
 45FY1 Fluorescent Yellow
 45FYG1 Fluorescent Yellow
 45FYG2 Fluorescent Dull Yellow
 45FYR1 Fluorescent Orange
 45G00 Jade Green
 45G02 Spectrum Green
 45G05 Emerald Green
 45G07 Nile Green
 45G09 Veronese Green
 45G12 Sea Green
 45G14 Apple Green
 45G16 Malachite
 45G17 Forest Green
 45G19 Bright Parrot Green
 45G20 Wax White
 45G21 Lime Green
 45G24 Willow
 45G28 Ocean Green
 45G29 Pine Tree Green
 45G40 Dim Green
 45G82 Spring Dim Green
 45G85 Verdigris
 45G94 Grayish Olive
 45G99 Olive
 45N0 Neutral Gray 0
 45N1 Neutral Gray 1
 45N10 Neutral Gray 10
 45N2 Neutral Gray 2
 45N3 Neutral Gray 3
 45N4 Neutral Gray 4
 45N5 Neutral Gray 5
 45N6 Neutral Gray 6
 45N7 Neutral Gray 7
 45N8 Neutral Gray 8
 45N9 Neutral Gray 9
 45H00 Pinkish White
 45H000 Cherry White
 45H02 Flesh
 45R05 Salmon Red
 45R08 Vermilion
 45R11 Palm Cherry Pink
 45R12 Light Tea Rose
 45R14 Light Rose
 45R17 Lipstick Orange
 45R20 Blush
 45R22 Light Prawn
 45R24 Prawn
 45R27 Cadmium Red
 45R29 Lipstick Red
 45R30 Pale Yellowish Pink
 45R32 Peach
 45R35 Coral
 45H37 Carmine
 45R39 Garnet
 45H43 Bougainvillea
 45R46 Strong Red
 45R59 Cardinal
 45RV02 Sugared Almond Pink
 45HV04 Shock Pink
 45RV06 Cerise
 45RV09 Fuchsia
 45RV10 Pale Pink
 45RV11 Pink
 45RV13 Tender Pink
 45RV14 Begonia Pink
 45RV17 Deep Magenta
 45RV19 Red Violet
 45RV21 Light Pink
 45RV23 Pure Pink
 45RV25 Dog Rose Flower
 45RV29 Crimson

45RV32 Shadow Pink
 45RV34 Burnt Umber
 45RV42 Salmon Pink
 45T0 Toner Gray 0
 45T1 Toner Gray 1
 45T10 Toner Gray 10
 45T2 Toner Gray 2
 45T3 Toner Gray 3
 45T4 Toner Gray 4
 45T5 Toner Gray 5
 45T6 Toner Gray 6
 45T7 Toner Gray 7
 45T8 Toner Gray 8
 45T9 Toner Gray 9
 45V01 Heath
 45V04 Lilac
 45V05 Marigold
 45V06 Lavender
 45V09 Violet
 45V12 Pale Lilac
 45V15 Mallow
 45V17 Amethyst
 45V18 Pale Crape
 45V95 Light Grape
 45V99 Aubergine
 45W0 Warm Gray 0
 45W1 Warm Gray 1
 45W2 Warm Gray 2
 45W3 Warm Gray 3
 45W4 Warm Gray 4
 45W5 Warm Gray 5
 45W6 Warm Gray 6
 45W7 Warm Gray 7
 45W8 Warm Gray 8
 45W9 Warm Gray 9
 45Y00 Barium Yellow
 45Y02 Canary Yellow
 45Y04 Acacia
 45Y05 Yellow
 45Y06 Acid Yellow
 45Y11 Pale Yellow
 45Y13 Lemon Yellow
 45Y15 Cadmium Yellow
 45Y17 Golden Yellow
 45Y19 Napoli Yellow
 45Y21 Buttercup Yellow
 45Y23 Yellowish Beige
 45Y26 Mustard

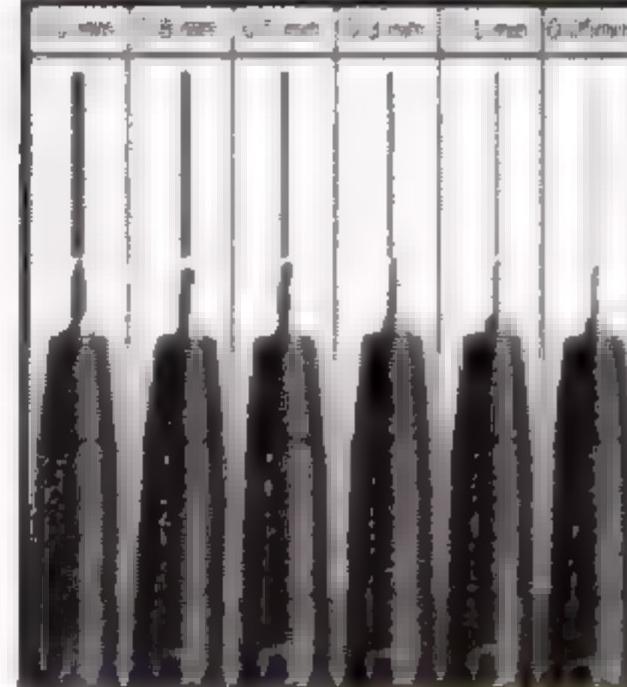
45Y28 Lionel Gold
 45Y32 Cashmere
 45Y35 Maize
 45Y38 Honey
 45Y40 Mimosa Yellow
 45Y41 Green Bice
 45Y43 Yellow Green
 45Y45 Salad
 45Y46 Acid Green
 45Y48 Lettuce Green
 45Y49 Mignonette
 45Y50 Chartreuse
 45Y51 Grass Green
 45Y52 Anise
 45Y53 New Leaf
 45Y54 Celadon Green
 45Y55 Pale Green
 45Y56 Cobalt Green
 45Y57 Pea Green
 45Y58 Moss
 45Y59 Putty
 45Y60 Grayish Yellow
 45Y61 Pale Olive
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 45Y63 Marine Green
 45Y64 Powder Pink
 45Y65 Silk
 45Y66 Light Orange
 45Y67 Chrome Orange
 45Y68 Cadmium Orange
 45Y69 Chinese Orange
 45Y70 Caramel
 45Y71 Apricot
 45Y72 Sanguine
 45Y73 Yellowish Shade
 45Y74 Creme
 45Y75 Yellow Ochre
 45Y76 Pale Sepia
 45Y77 Light Reddish Yellow
 45Y78 Yellowish Skin Pink
 45Y79 Atoll
 45Y80 Orange
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 462 Sketch 72 Set D \$356.40



• 500 Copic Opaque White \$9.75

COPIC Opaque White is a water based white pigment used for highlight effects. It won't bleed into the base color so it gives sharp line definition and can be used on watercolor as well as other permanent ink surfaces.

510 Copic Alcohol Marker Pad A4 \$9.95
 520 Copic Alcohol Marker Pad B4 \$19.95
 530 TOO Manga Manuscript Paper A4 \$6.95
 540 TOO Manga Manuscript Paper B4 \$9.95
 550 72 pc wire stand \$69.95
 560 36 pc block stand \$29.95



• COPIC's MULTILINER® drawing pens allow drawing without annoying running ink. They are available in pens and brush. The pens come in a wide range of line widths (from .05 to 1.0 mm) while the brushes come in three different sizes: small, medium and large.

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 610 Multiliner .1 \$2.50
 620 Multiliner .3 \$2.50

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640 Multiliner 0.8	\$2.50
650 Multiliner 1.0	\$2.50
660 Multiliner Brush M	\$2.95
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- 705 ABS-1 Kit \$60.95
ABS-1 Kit COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use - just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the airbrush ABS-1 Kit. It comes with 1. Air Grip (where the pen goes in) 2. The air adapter (where the empty canister that the air grip screws on to). The canister is just a reservoir; it does not contain air.) 3. The airhose (this connects from the bottom of the air adapter to the top of the can) 4. The can 80-5. The air can holder (a foam square with 3 holes in it so that you can stand the different sizes of cans) This kit has all of the components in it for someone who would like to have portability but have to option to connect it to a compressor.

- 710 Starting Set ABS-2 \$28.50
Set ABS-2 COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use - just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the portable version of our airbrush system. The ABS-2 Kit comes with a D-60 can of compressed air and the Airgrip. This item is great for the artist on the move. ONLY the D-60 can can be attached directly to the air grip because of some special tubing inside the can. The other sizes of cans 80 and 180 have to be attached to the hose and then to the air adapter. They hold more air but are not so portable.

720 Starting Set ABS-3 \$28.50
730 Airgrip \$17.10
740 Air Adapter \$11.40
750 Airhose 1/4 to 1/8 \$21.50
755 Airhose 1/8 to 1/8 \$21.50
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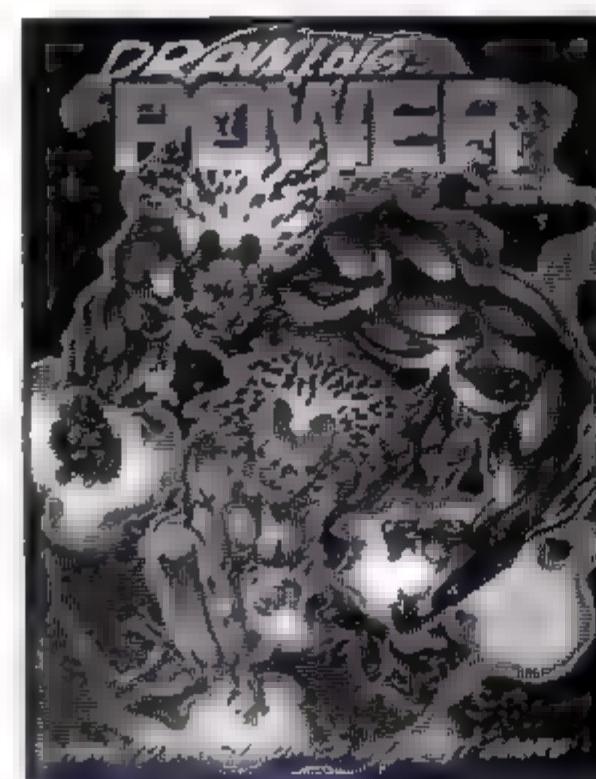
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The art of Ashley (Spawn, TMP, X-Men) Wood. If you're a fan of Ashley's artwork this book shows many never published pieces from his portfolio (mature reader).

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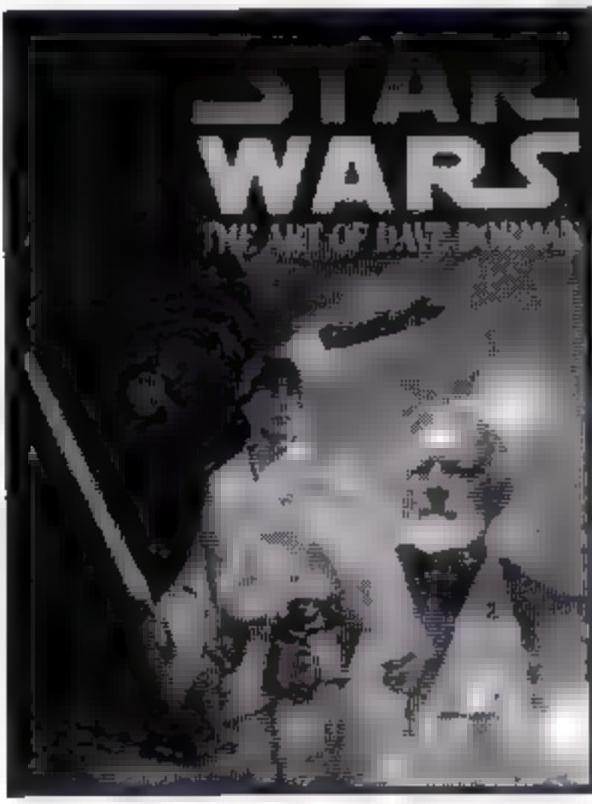
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96 Full colored pages Hardcover

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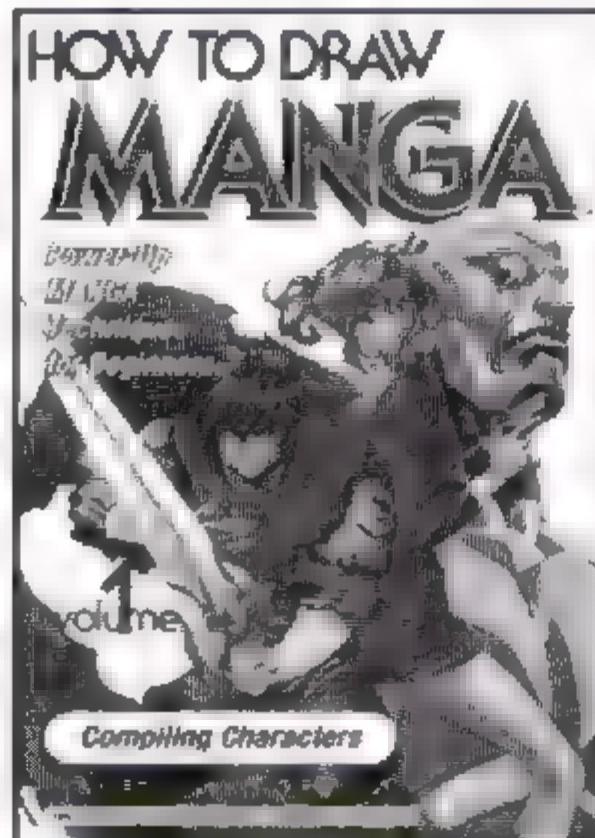
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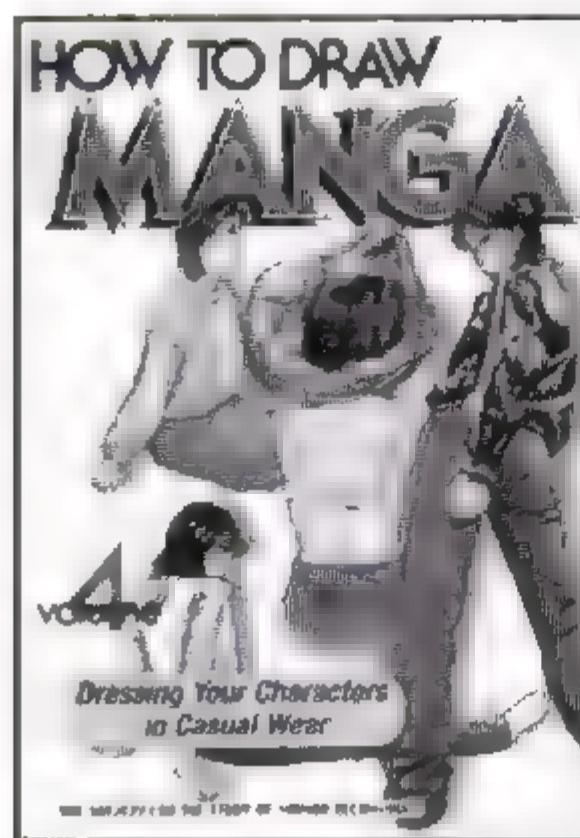
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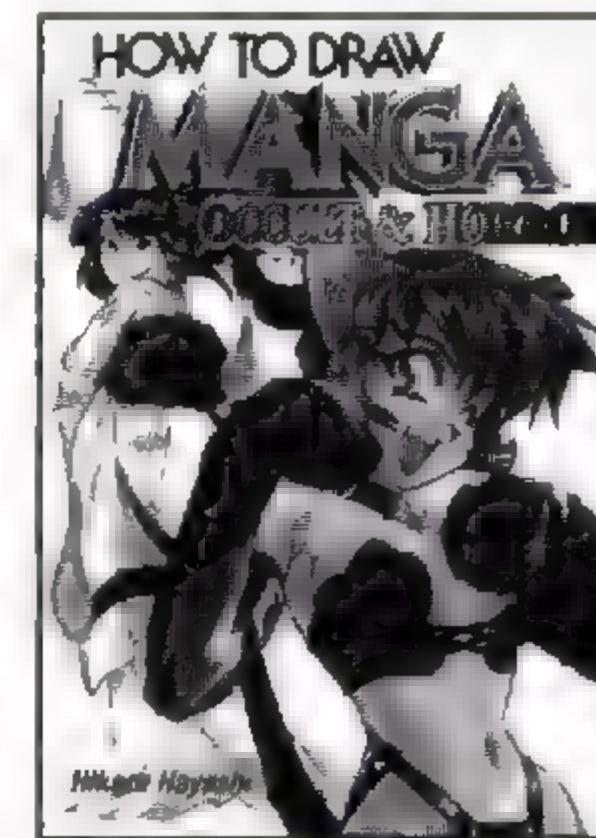
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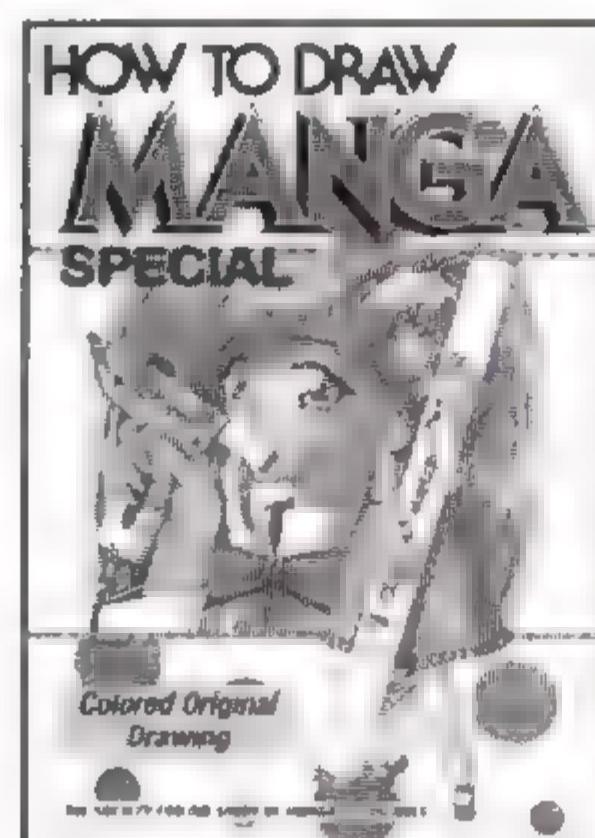
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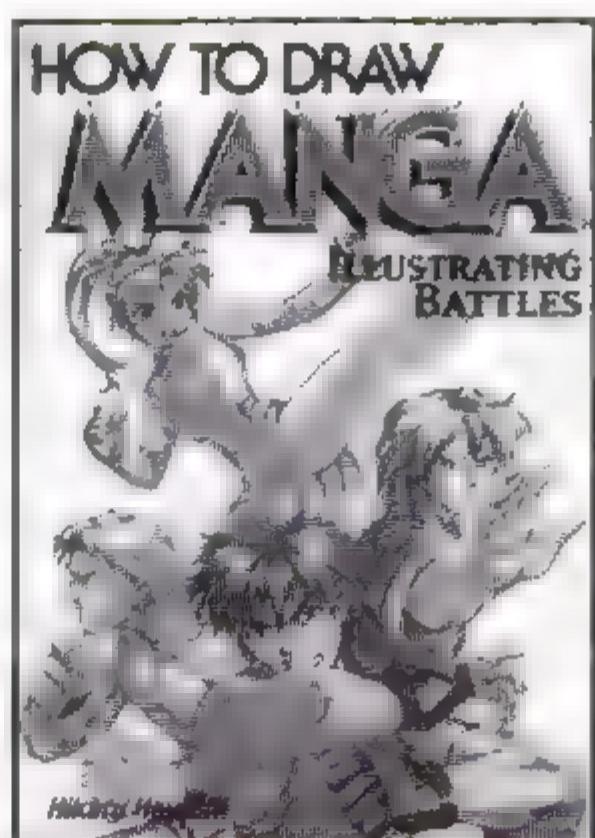
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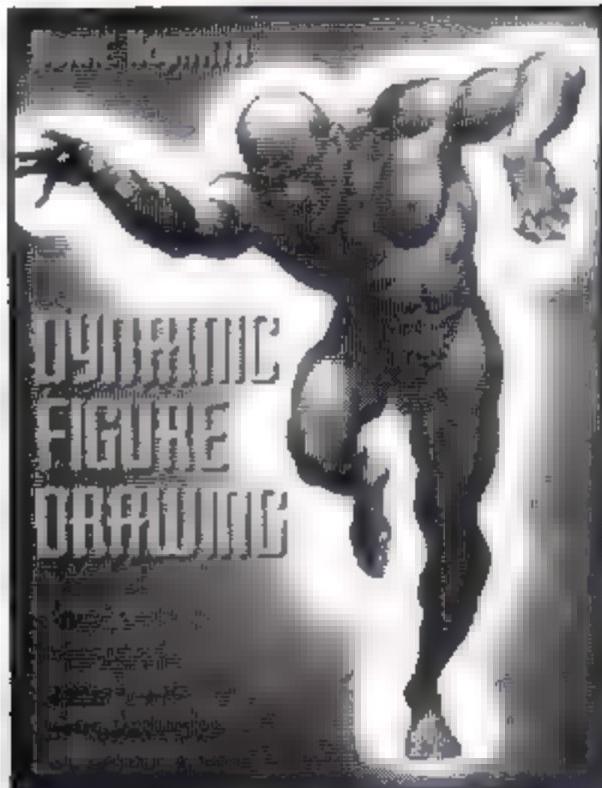
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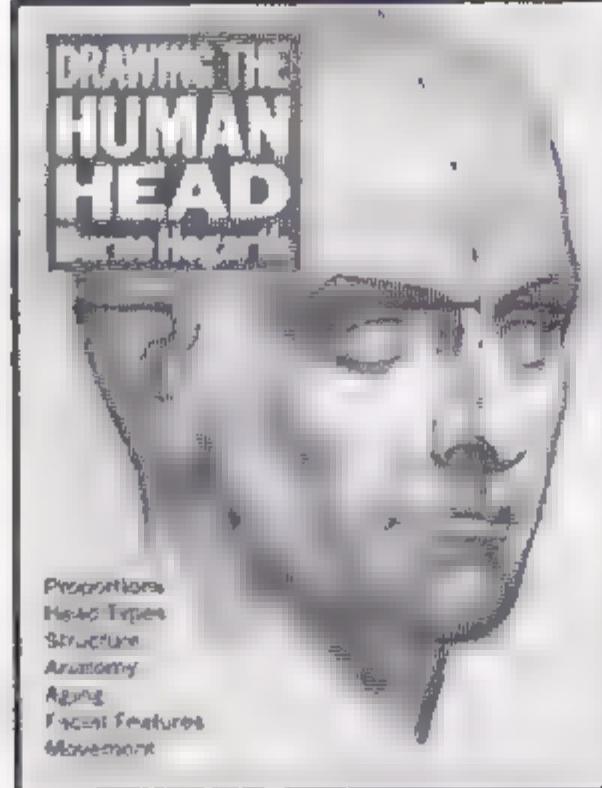
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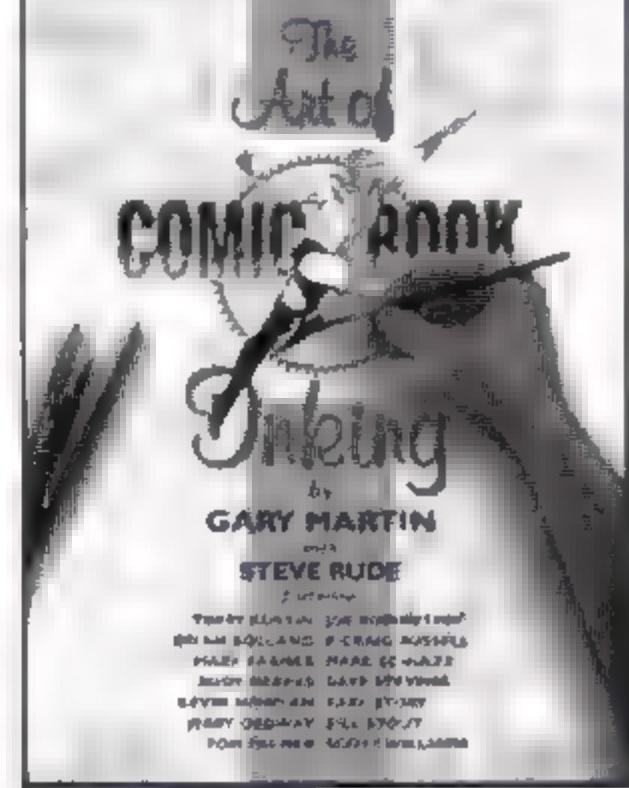
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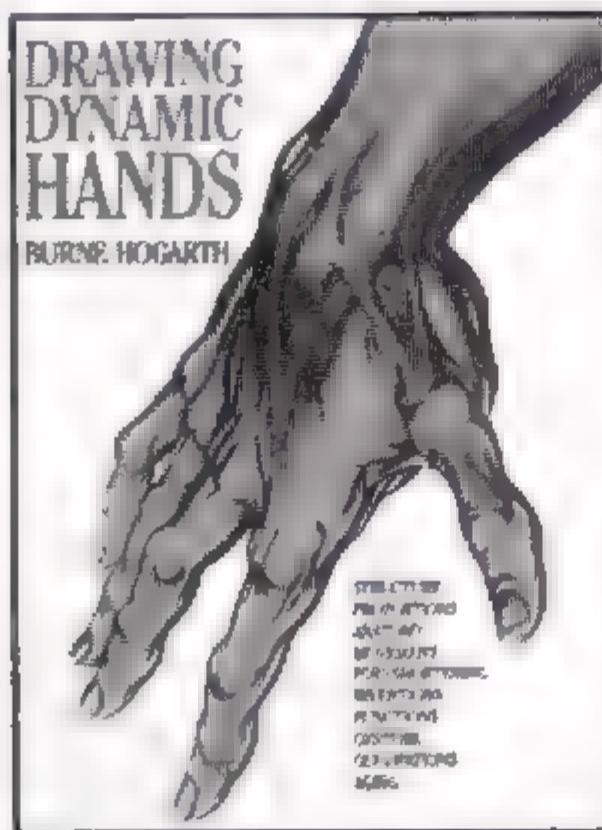
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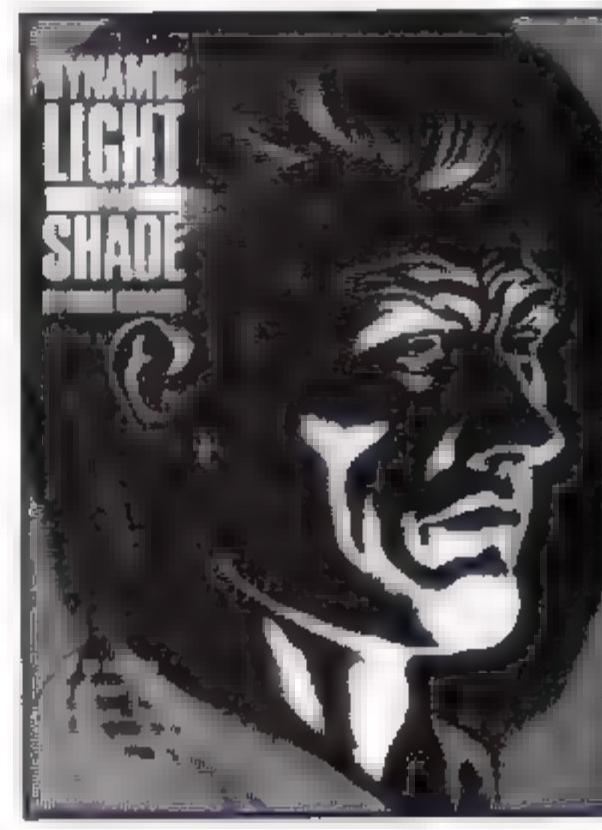
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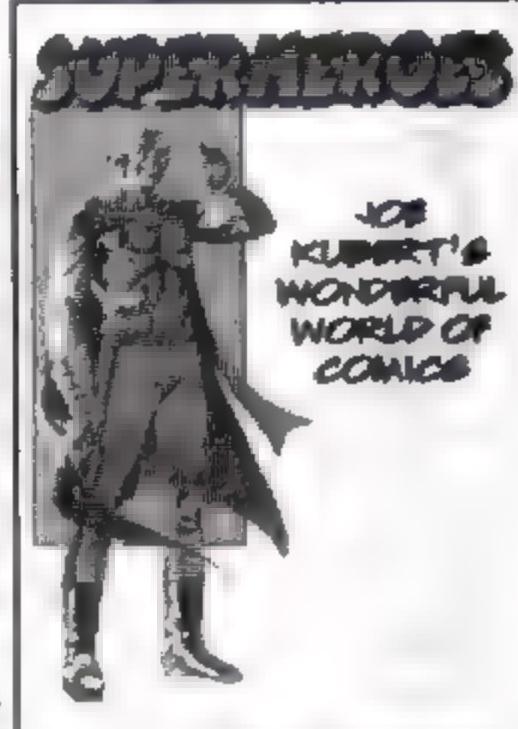
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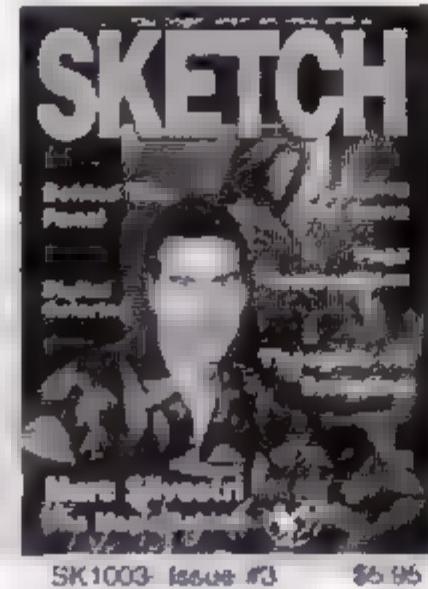
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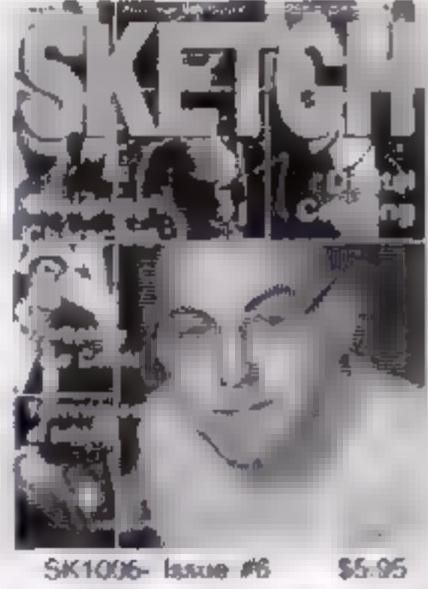
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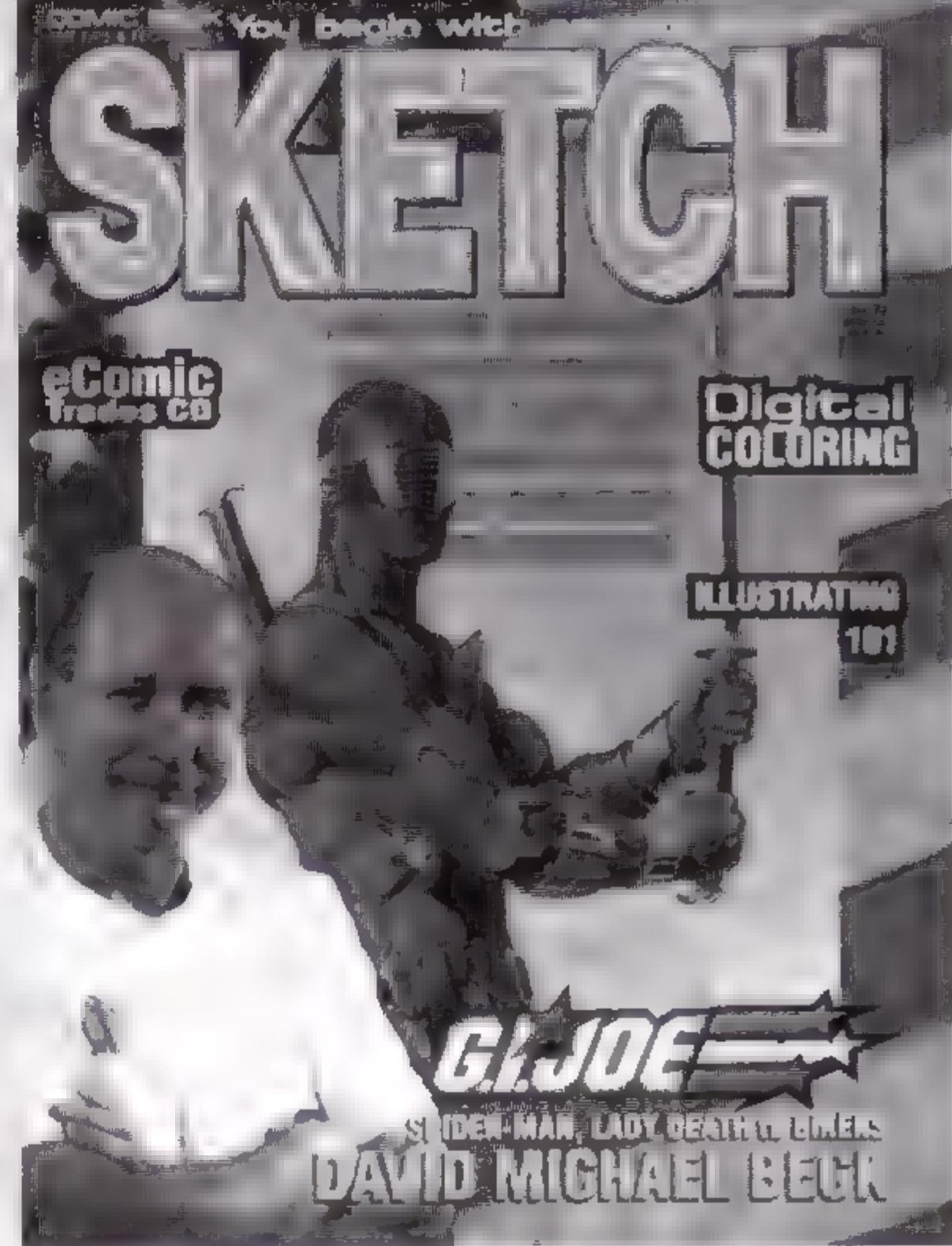
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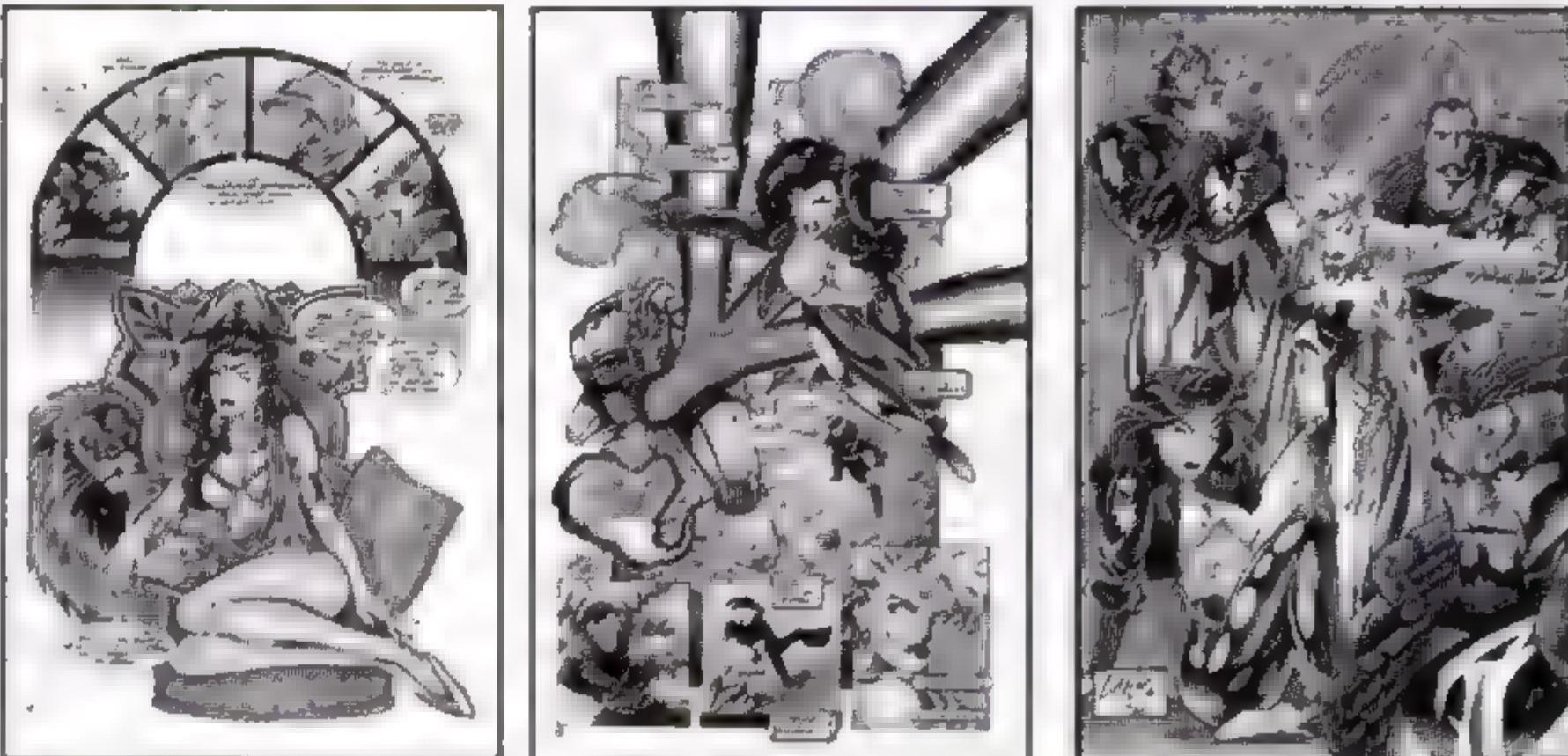
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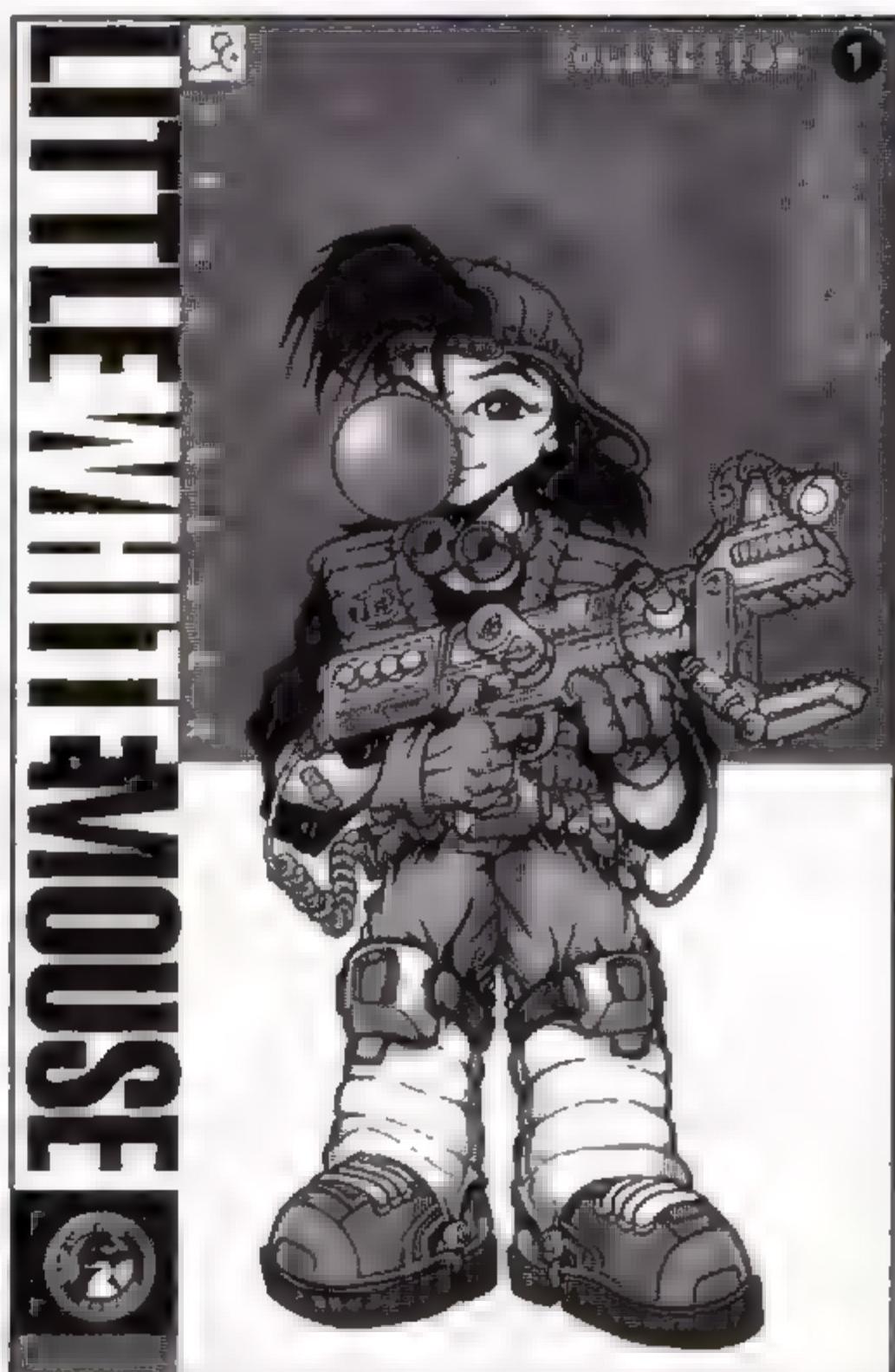
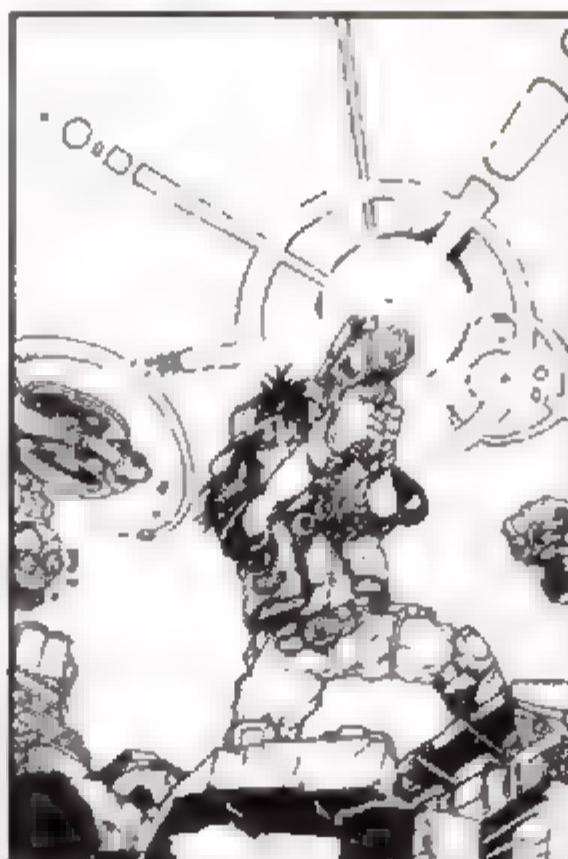
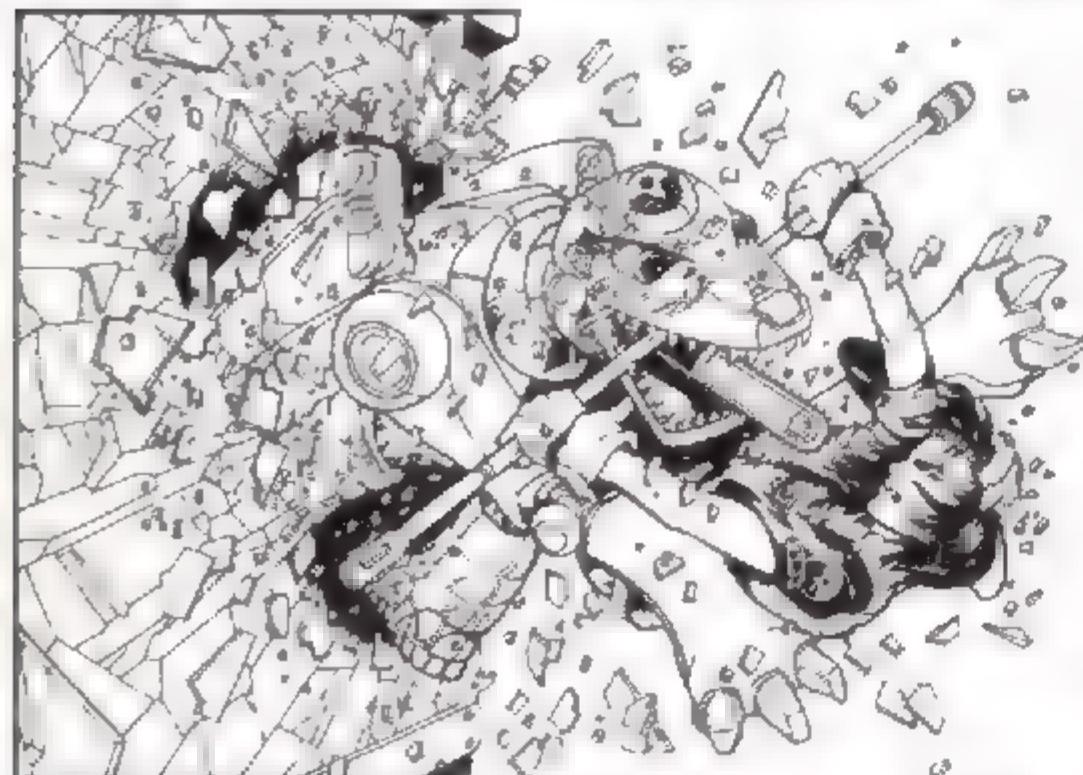
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The Universe at Your Finger Tips

Thoughts on Scripting Comic Books

Making Your Characters Real

by Tom Bierbaum

Let's talk this time about how to make your characters deeper and more real. It's one of the tougher challenges in the comic-book business, trying to write rich, believable characters with lots of layers to them, characters who'll consistently intrigue and surprise the readers yet remain true to themselves and their original conceptions.

In this business of exaggeration and hype, there's always a tendency to hang one or two bold personality quirks on a character and then just hammer away at them forever, or to veer from that approach with shock-value twists and revelations that yank the character off-course and violate what it was originally conceived to accomplish.

So here are some thoughts on how to avoid those well-worn paths and come up with characters that are just a little deeper and a little more real than what readers may be used to in a comic book.

1. Stow the Comic-Book Notion of What "Realism" Is.

If there's anything that make me want to gag about the approach dominating comics (and most popular culture these days), it's how we're so quick to pat ourselves on the back for making our heroes bicker and get killed and struggle with alcoholism and not have happy endings all the time, "just like in real life." And then these "realistic" characters return from the dead, have three-day pregnancies that produce alien offspring, save the universe 20 or 30 times in their lives, and still become pariahs the first time some sleazeball comes up with a half-baked frame-up against them. Just like in real life.

Well of course such things happen in a comic book, we protest, it's supposed to be exciting and larger than life. Well, OK, then how come when somebody else's comic book had elements we didn't like, we criticized it for being "unrealistic," but when the comics we like take even more outrageous flights of fancy, that's OK because comics are supposed to be that way?

As writers, I think we can all start being a little slower to dismiss old-fashioned stories where the heroes always win, or they all get along (in fact, there are people who almost always win and there are groups of people that really do get along — it doesn't happen

every day, but then, neither do three-day pregnancies). And let's also be a little tougher on what passes for realism in the comic-book world of today.

Part of the reason "flawed heroes" seemed so refreshing about 35 years ago was because it was a new level of realism beyond what was common in the comics of the time. But it's now 35 years later, and the level of realism that seemed so refreshing back in the 1960s is getting a little musty these days.

I'm not saying we have to stop doing the stock characters of today's comic book world — teen-age mutants nobody understands, sinister corporate conspirators, brooding, vicious warhorses with noble hearts. Personally, I thought these characterizations were pretty cornball from day one, but they've worked for millions of readers and we should keep encouraging those millions to spend their money on the industry's products (just as we should have kept encouraging the millions who preferred comics where the heroes always won to keep spending *their* money on our products).

But as a writer, you can keep doing these old-fashioned "flawed heroes" when appropriate, while at the same time exploring new levels of realism to find out what might be next for the genre. To an extent, I think that's what we got with Frank Miller's "Dark Knight," Alan Moore's "Watchmen" and Neil Gaiman's "Sandman." But few of us will ever be able to write the way those guys wrote, so I wouldn't recommend trying to imitate them. Rather, work at finding your own new approach toward greater realism and candor in your characters and maybe you'll come up with something that has as much to say to a jaded, bored readership as did those other landmark comics.

So how do you do that?

2. Figure Out Your Characters' Backgrounds.

To an extent, we're all products of our past. If you grew up in a loving, supportive home, you're likely to come out different than if you grew up in an abusive environment. If you were constantly bullied at school, lost a parent at an early age, felt confined by your surroundings, or whatever, it's going to have an impact on how you deal with the world

through the rest of your life. Childhood adversity might make you a better person or a worse person, but it *will* affect you.

For your key characters, try figuring out what their parents and siblings were like, and even what their grandparents were like (since the grandparents had a great deal to do with how the parents turned out). Think about how these people raised their children and how it's produced the characters you're writing. You can plant family attitudes, values, prejudices, secrets and codes of honor that will influence your characters as they face the challenges you throw at them. As an example, think of how different Superman might have turned out if, say, Mr and Mrs Al Capone had found that rocket ship instead of Ma and Pa Kent.

One of the cool things about building a little family tree for your character is that you start thinking of strange, interesting, real people in the background of your universe. Most of the time you'll never see these people in your story, they're just part of the background you're building for your own purposes. But sometimes you'll come up with the perfect opportunity to pop one of these background characters on-camera and give your storyline an unexpected surge.

And by the way, this approach will often lead you to discover that your villains have been produced by mistreatment earlier in their lives. But this doesn't mean you do or don't have to make your bad guys sympathetic "victims of society." I happen to think most real-life bad guys have, in fact, turned out that way because of some sort of abuse, neglect or other mistreatment, but I also wouldn't say that justifies or forgives their misdeeds. Understanding what contributes to people being the way they are doesn't mean approving of the way they are. It's my feeling that all of us in real life, and the characters in your fiction, should be expected to make the best of the hands they're dealt in life, and to take responsibility for their actions no matter how poor a hand they've ended up with.

3. Figure Out For Yourself What Makes People Tick.

To me, there are a lot of flat, corny bits of conventional wisdom about how the world works that drive many comic-book universes, but as you create backgrounds for your

characters, you don't have to subscribe to those oft-used concepts unless you happen to honestly agree with them. So instead of just shaping the dynamics of your worlds to agree with all the other comic-book worlds out there, take a good, hard look at every assumption you make as you develop your characters' backgrounds. A lot of us are very attached personally or politically to notions of "what's wrong with society," but if you assemble flat, dogmatic and artificial back stories to explain your characters' behaviors, you're going to get flat, dogmatic, artificial characterizations.

As long as you're going to do to the work of fleshing out your characters and their backgrounds, then deal with the world in its complexity and subtlety. Resist the urge to blame your character's problems on some currently popular scapegoat, and instead figure out where that scapegoat's problems came from. Stop giving us worlds whose problems are the faults of some evil, conspiratorial class, or where the world is just a terminally screwed-up place because humans are by nature terminally screwed-up. Rather, try viewing the world as the result of good and bad choices being made in every-day life by every-day people.

The last time I read many comic books there certainly seemed to be a lot of two-bit psychology and sociology being espoused, much of it beating up on the same safe targets. If you take your writing seriously, try to resist falling into lockstep with everyone else's version of what's wrong with the world, unless you happen to honestly agree with the prevailing point of view.

4. Base Your Characters On People You Know.

No, don't use their real names and images. They will sue.

But study the people around you and figure out what makes them tick, and put that into

the characters you write. The bully who torments you, the co-worker you have a crush on, the boss who's out to get you, the pal with whom you have a great rapport — the people who mean the most to you, positively or negatively, are the people you'll think about most and understand the most, and have the best chance of turning into vivid characters the readers will respond to.

And you'll often find it works better to come up with composite characters that take some facets from different people you know. That way you can really tailor the character to the situation, and reduce the chance of people around you recognizing themselves in your work and potentially taking offense.

5. Put Your Character In Improbable Positions and See What Happens

As a writing exercise, take your key characters and imagine them in unlikely, silly and mundane circumstances, and explore how they'd uniquely react to those circumstances. Think of scenes that would be fun to write — your character unknowingly gets inebriated, has his or her personality transferred into a very different body; wins a million dollars in the lottery; is convincingly framed for a notorious crime; becomes the romantic obsession of a highly desirable or undesirable character; gets transformed into a Saturday morning version of himself or herself; gets a dose of "truth serum" and has to tell the unvarnished truth at all times; meets his or her perfect mate; whatever.

Try to make each one of these experimental little scenes a real grabber, a great story in and of itself, because it's an expression of a great character. As you explore and stretch your character, you may discover facets to it you hadn't consciously developed earlier. And sometimes you'll create some new unexpected scenes for your existing storyline.

that greatly flesh out your character for the readers.

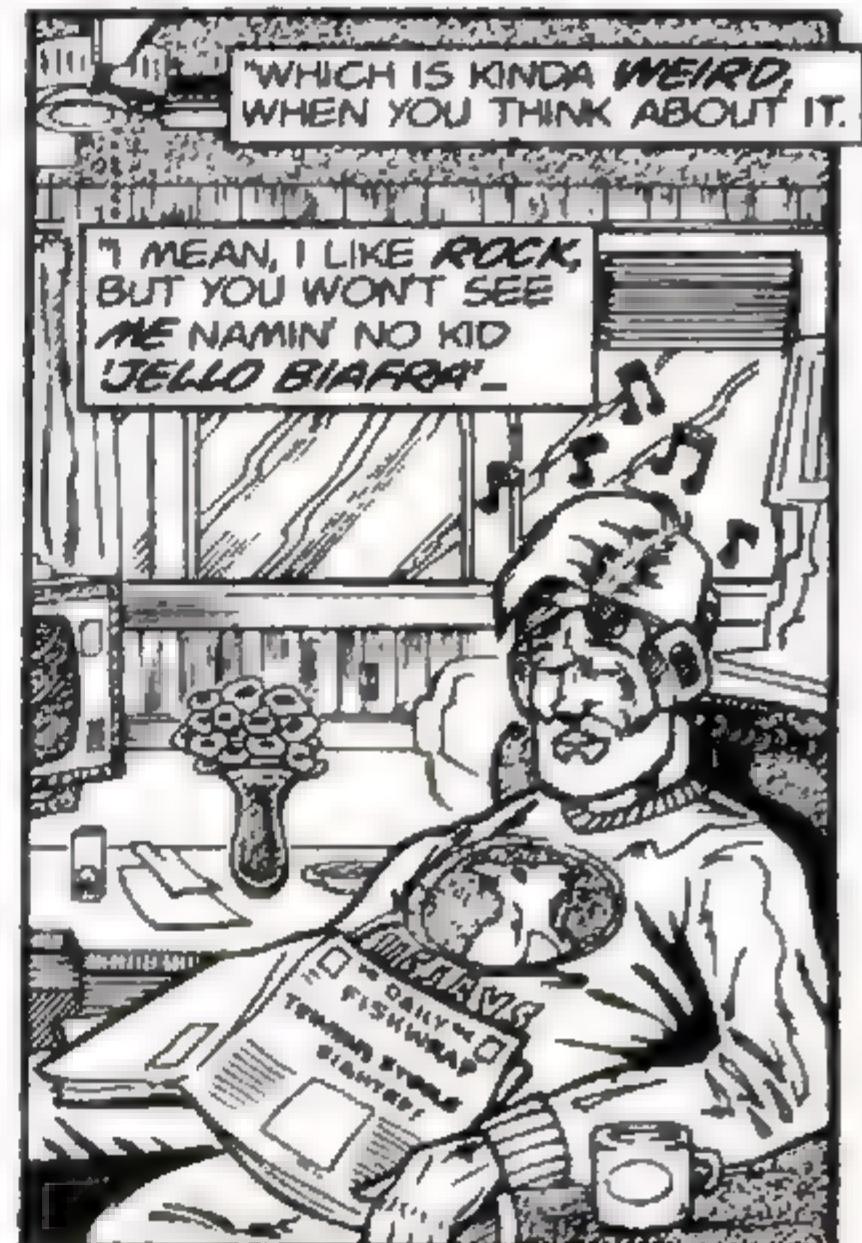
6. People's Lives Aren't a Series of Random Events, But Expressions of Their Personalities.

An aspiring writer once asked us for books we'd recommend, and the best suggestion I could come up with was really an odd one — a self-help book called "You Can Heal Your Life." The feel-good New-Agey philosophy of that book certainly isn't going to work for all readers, but it explores life in a way that, I think, helps put characters into better focus.

One of the philosophies of the book is that we've all chosen the life we're living. That's quite a revolutionary concept, especially in the world of comics, where it seems like everyone's moping around about how unjust and tortured their existence is. Well, if a character's life is so darn unpleasant, why did he or she choose it? I've always felt comics have a lot more resonance when, instead of presenting stories about a bunch of characters who feel trapped in their unpleasant lives, they focus on characters who're doing what they chose to do with their lives, dealing with the consequences of those choices, and accepting the lives that result.

It's certainly true that none of us has 100% freedom to do absolutely what we want with our lives. But once we're out of the nest and living on our own, we do pretty much choose who we live with, where we live, who we work for and what we do with ourselves. Hearing people complain about the results of those choices can be pretty boring in real life, and it can be just as boring in your comic book stories.

Another concept this self-help book hammers home is that our behavior determines how others treat us. Ever notice how some people never seem to get along with any of their bosses in any of their jobs, while others



Think about the parents of your characters and how they helped produced the unique, surprising and human facets of the person you're writing about.



Put your character in improbable positions and see what happens. In this case, we've got two shy kids dealing with an unspoken attraction, for each other so we spice things up by stranding the young lady in the bushes with no clothes. It was a fun scene to write and it advanced and further defined their relationship.

get along with all their bosses? And how some bosses are hated by all of their workers while others are beloved by all of theirs? How is this possible if these individuals aren't in some way bringing about these responses through their own behaviors?

So, tempting as it is to depict characters who're just wonderful human beings who have all kinds of nasty things happen to them, start thinking of your characters as facing conflicts that are creations of their own personalities.

In real life, there *are* wonderful human beings who have all kinds of bad things randomly happen to them – I've certainly known a few. But stories about random, unfair events aren't going to say as much as stories about events that reflect and define your characters.

Of course, there's room for both. A story where a hero randomly comes down with a deadly disease, the way you or I might, can still say a great deal about your character. Watching this individual handle such a challenge in his or her unique way certainly can produce a great tale. But don't make such coincidental events your usual source of story material or you'll miss a key chance to add layers of living, breathing human life to your characters.

7. People Develop and Change in Important, Specific Ways.

There are obscure areas of study about how people and cultures develop that can give you key insights into the human personality, and the source of a lot of conflicts between persons and cultures.

If you're still in school or willing to do some significant reading, seek out courses, books, articles and documentaries on inter-cultural communication, sociology, anthropology, etc. Delve into these areas and

you'll get insights into how people besides you, and cultures besides ours, tend to think. And that's a key ability to have if you're trying to populate your universes with characters that aren't just different versions of yourself.

It's a complicated area and one I probably can't cover adequately here, so I'll dedicate my next column to an in-depth discussion of inter-personal and inter-cultural issues.

8. Keep All of These Tips In Perspective.

For one thing, don't think the great writers perform all these writing exercises on all of their characters, any more than the great artists go through all the steps an inexperienced artist should go through when he's trying to master comic-book art. Try these exercises to see if they help you and produce better characters; skip them if they become cumbersome and start sapping your enthusiasm. Enjoying the process and loving what you produce are important ingredients to success in this business, so don't create a process that robs you of those important rewards.

But pay attention when these writing exercises steer you into brick walls. If you have a lot of trouble envisioning your characters' parents or figuring out what your characters would do if they won the lottery, you may have some conceptual flaws that need attention.

Also, don't make the mistake I think most of the industry has made over recent decades; that taking steps to produce deeper, more believable characters can somehow become required and part of a new definition of "good" comic-book characters. The business flourished for decades with one-dimensional and two-dimensional characters and hasn't been doing so well for the last couple of decades with supposedly more fleshed-out,

believable characters.

Figure out what audience you're trying to reach, what works best for them, and gauge your characters accordingly. To me, most characters on today's market are no less two-dimensional than the old 1950s Batman or Superman, they've just been swung around to the darker, more cynical end of the comic-book characterization spectrum. But that's okay if that's what your particular audience thrives on. Don't start telling those readers the characters they like are bad, or we may end up chasing away the few readers the business has left.

Let there be old-fashioned heroes who are symbols of truth and justice, let there be newer old-fashioned heroes who are the darker, flawed responses to those earlier heroes, and let there be something new and different in your writing — characters that go beyond either set of comic-book traditions, and give your readers an invigorating new sense of reality rooted in your unique take on how real people operate in the real world.

There's room for all of these categories because there's an audience that prefers each one. Learn to do all three of them well, or learn which one you do best, and you'll optimize your chances of success in this business. If, on the other hand, you convince yourself that only one character type makes for "good" comics, then you're limiting what comics can accomplish as a medium, and what you can accomplish as a writer.

Have a question? You can contact Tom at TomB@bluelinenpro.com

How to Draw “Thumbnails”

by Mitch Byrd

What is a thumbnail?

It is a little sketch that helps you lay out the design for a more complex finished drawing that you want to sell for publication or presentation. A little bit of practice that allows you to plan an illustration's design, but still allows you to keep spontaneity in the drawing.

The thumbnail sketch can certainly be larger than your thumb's nail - just make sure you just put as much effort into this preliminary sketch as is needed to help make the finished drawing a better drawing. Do not burn yourself out on the thumbnail, keep most of your powder dry for the final drawing. Keeping yourself fresh for the final drawing will allow you to translate your energy to the content of the final piece.

The thumbnail also helps you exclude ideas that don't work. If the design of the thumbnail doesn't strike your fancy, then the odds are that the final drawing will fall flat as well.

Here's an example of how thumbnails helped lead me to a more successful final drawing. For illustration #1, I wanted to show a young knight who is being chased by a horde of angry giants. How do I draw the giants at their most threatening?

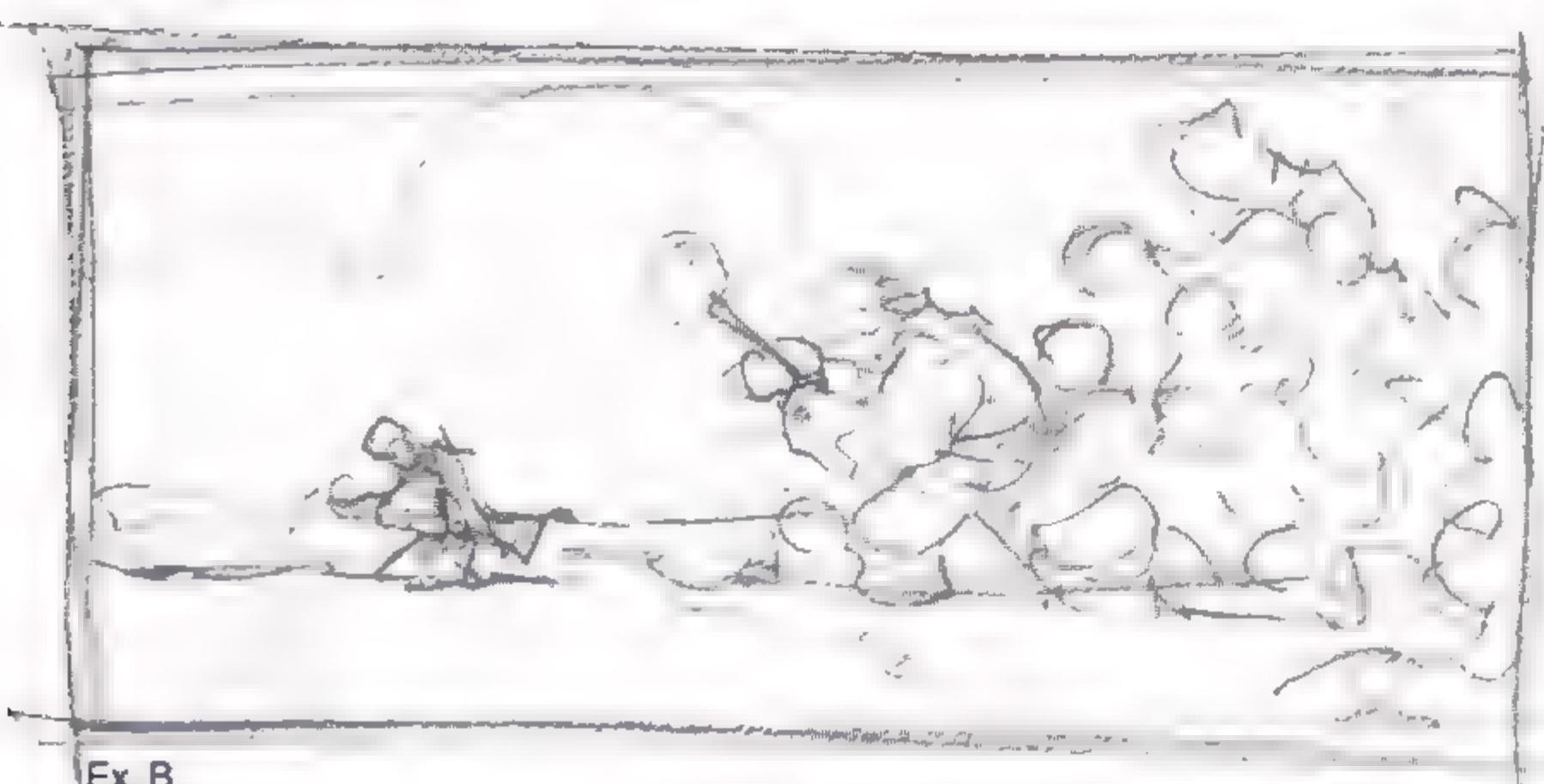


Illustration #1

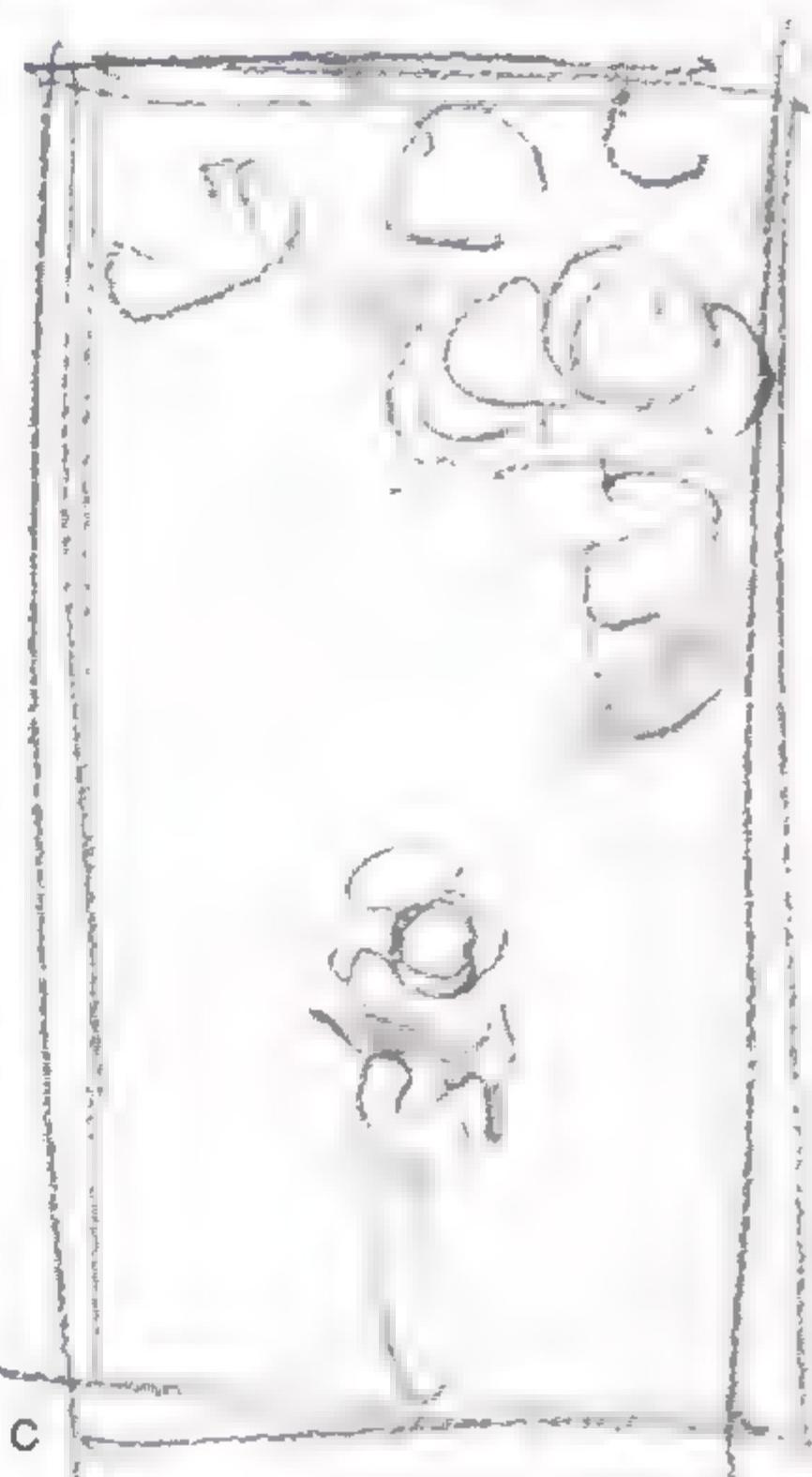
Take a look at thumbnail sketches A through E. You can see how I progressed from moving the figures straight across the picture #1's format in thumbnails A, B, C, and D, to having the knight's figure coming right at the viewer with a page-filling wall of giants following him in thumbnail E. I will admit thumbnail E is somewhat vague, but it contained the essential information I needed to help me visualize the idea I had in my head. I was the only person that needed to understand things at that point, since I was the only person involved in producing the illustration. With all the necessary information I needed to work set down, I was now able to move easily into the finished drawing # 1.



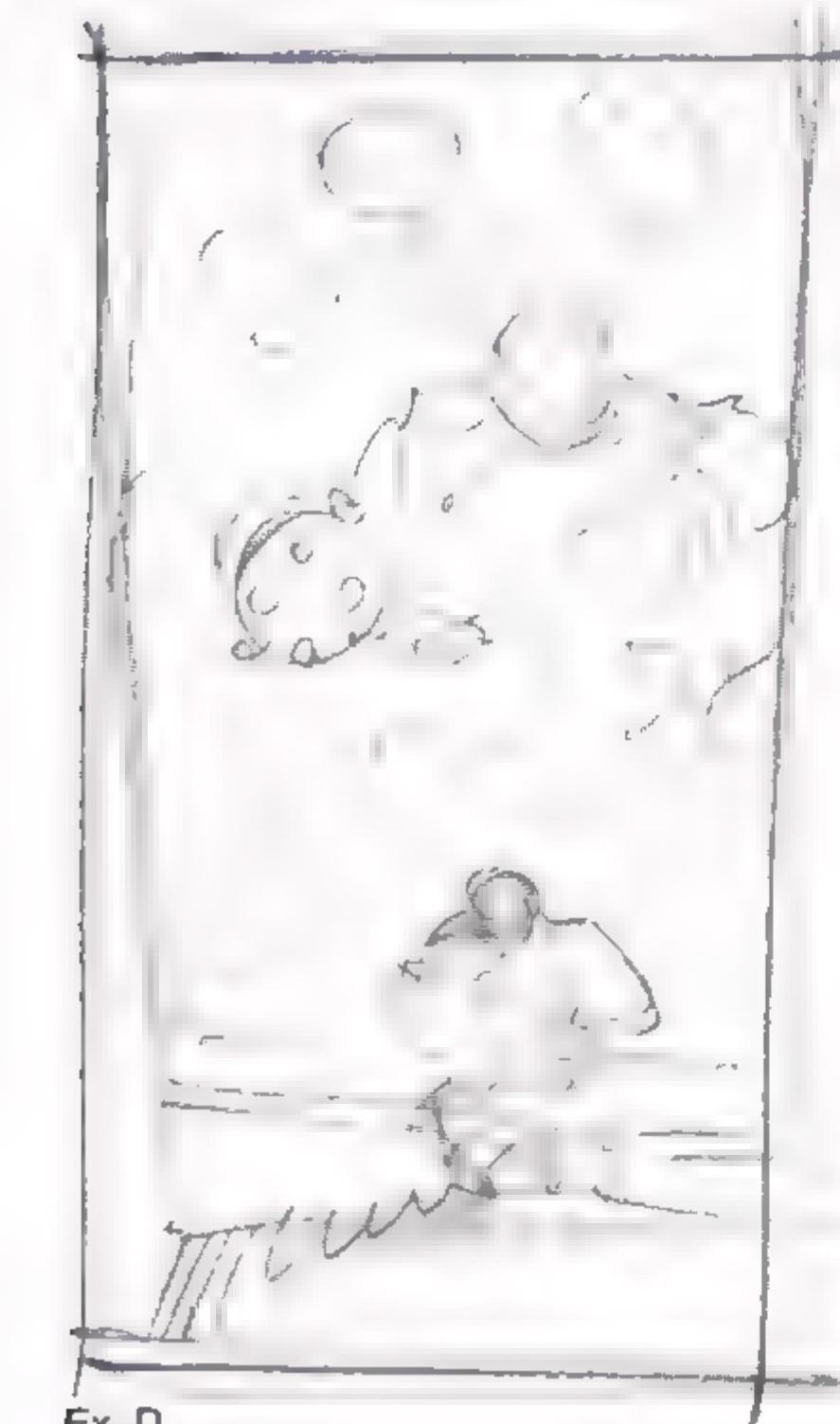
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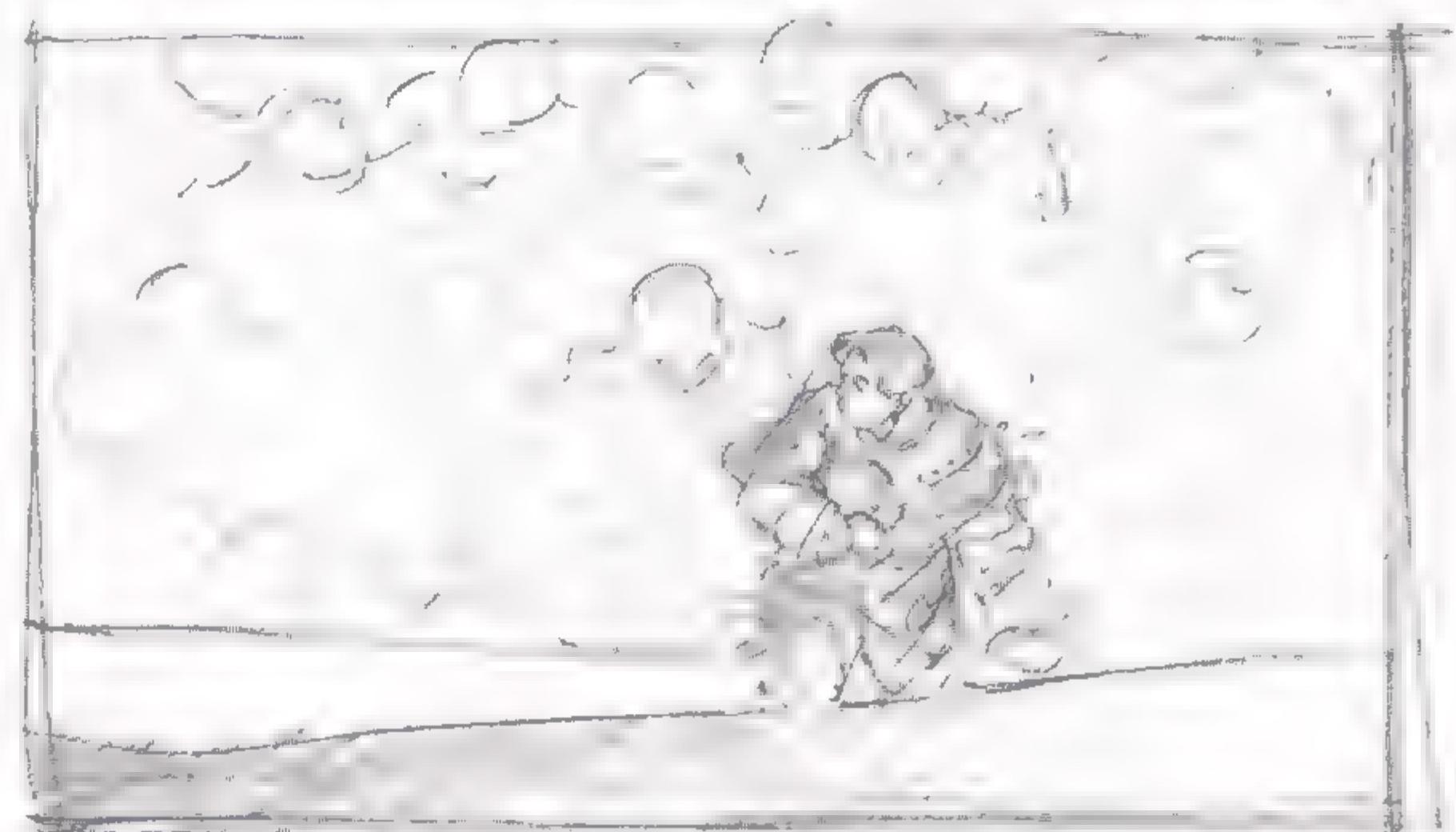
Ex. B



Ex. C



Ex. D



Ex. E

This is a fine procedure unless an editor or client needs the thumbnails for preliminary approval before you move to your finished piece. Editorial approval is extremely common in the comic business, particularly when it comes to covers, or promotional art that is not simply to be excised from the body of the comic. In this case your thumbnails have to be clear enough to communicate your ideas to that second party (which can often involve a number of people), so it's good to include as much simple and clear time-saving information as possible.

Take a look at thumbnail Ex.F that I did in preparation for illustration #2. Check out the written notes here and there. These fast little descriptions help to insure that you and the editor are on the same page, as well as avoid any possible misconceptions of the illustration's elements before you put all the work into the final drawing. Not a bad thing when dealing with the wild concepts, and wilder deadlines, of the mainstream comic business.

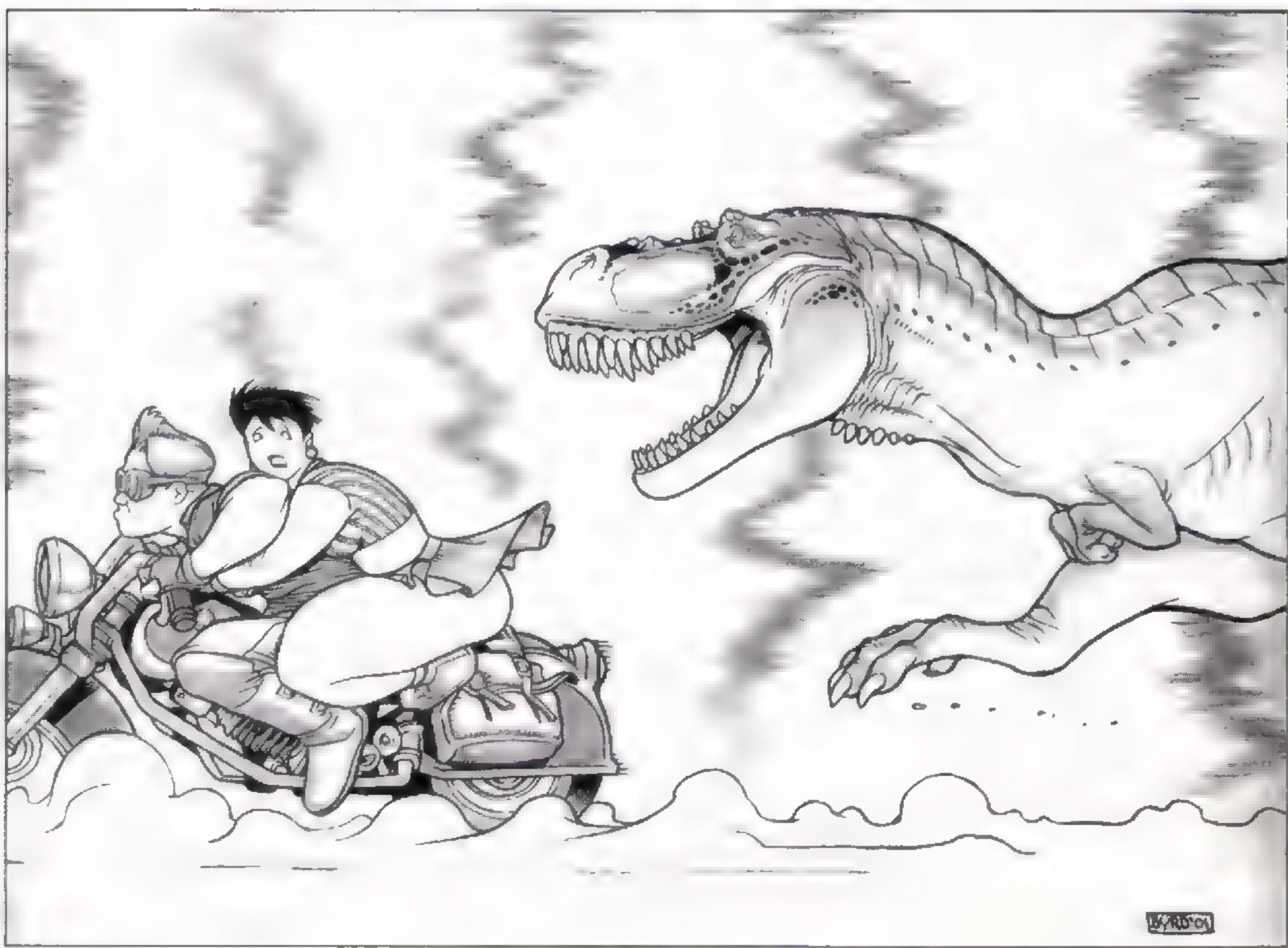
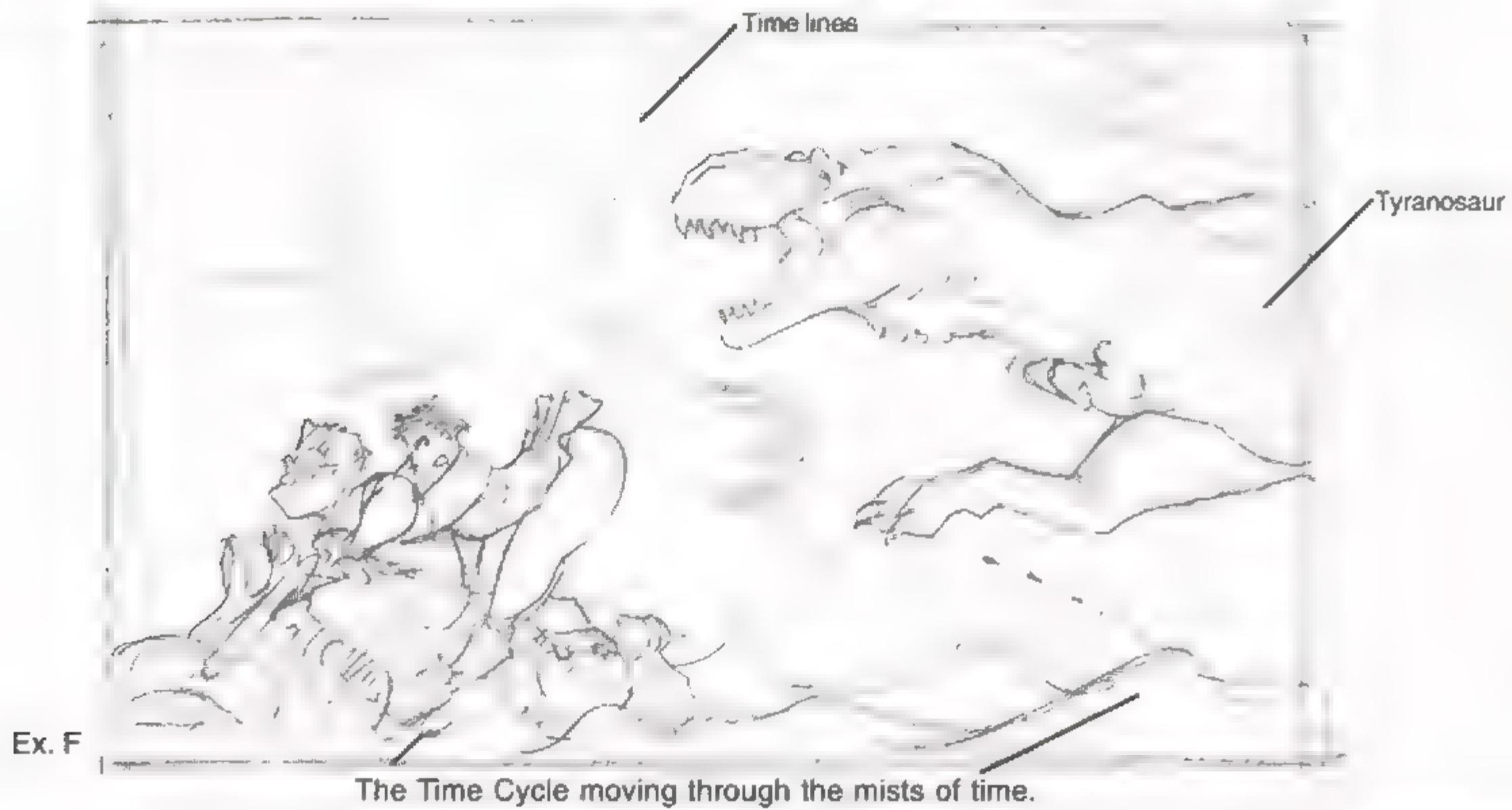


Illustration #2

HOW to Talk to an Editor

by Chuck Dixon

Okay, let's assume you're an aspiring writer and you're actually going to get to meet and talk to, live and in person, a comic book editor.

We can assume, unless you're a stalker, that this meeting will occur across a table at a convention. The editor is busy signing books, or talking to other aspiring comics creators, or struggling to keep a smile on his face while being pestered by continuity geeks.

What's your first step? Hand him a proposal? (He'll never read it.)

A business card? Sorry. They wind up being tossed out along with his convention badge.

Well then, how the heck do you make an impression?

Slowly.

I realized early on that editors are people too. Once I got over the initial shock of this revelation, I re-evaluated my editor-approaching techniques. Getting an editor to know and recognize you takes time. It's less important to them that you know the origins of the entire League of Ultramen than it is that you can hold a conversation, and don't spit food when you talk. They need to know they can work with you. They need to know that (for at least a brief stretch of time) you can be witty and erudite.

So, rather than shove a few typewritten pages into their hands and mumble something at their company's booth, endeavor to find a way to speak to them in another environment. This was easier when cons were smaller. You could join discussion groups, and sidle into an editor and hopefully say something to make him laugh. If you say something that makes him laugh and you meant it to be a serious comment, then laugh with him anyway and add something else self-effacing. If you're going to have a rapport with an editor, this is where it starts.

When you've reached a point where the editor no longer has to be reminded who you are, then call for an interview. For pity's sake, don't ask for an interview while at a con. Wait 'til the con is over and call him at the office. That's when you bring your proposal. That's when you make it plain that you're serious and want a career in comics.

That's important. You want a career. Not, "Gosh I'd kill to write Captain Asparagus." Chances are they're full up with guys who want to write Captain Asparagus. You make it plain that you're a professional writer and will write any character, no matter how miserable or thankless. Not only that, but you'd love to have a crack at their lowest selling title or licensing nightmare. Let them know you love the medium and you're here for the long haul.

Of course, all of this depends on the editor. Finding an editor that you can have a rapport with is difficult. Chances are, a clue to this is in the books they work on. Knowing that I'd have at least something in common with Archie Goodwin or Larry Hama was a no-brainer for me. I admired all of their work and their approach to comics. When I met them and worked for them I found out I liked them as people as well. That connection between us and the things we liked formed a professional relationship, and made it easy for us to work together.

See, you'll never get anywhere in comics if, when your editor needs to call you, he says, "Oh God, do I have to talk to this clown again?" So, that rapport is paramount. They gotta like you and they gotta like your work.

A watchword I have lived by all my freelance life is, "You'll never get anywhere in comics until you find an editor who has faith in you." I've been very fortunate in that area. When I've worked with editors who believed in me I was encouraged to take chances and do solid work. When I had an editor with no faith in my abilities I wound up with Moon Knight.

Another hint when talking to an editor; never say, "Hell, I can write The Astonishing Dr Amazing better than (fill in name of current writer)." The editor you're talking to hired that guy. Or he was best man at the editor's wedding. Or something else like that.

Networking is also a good idea for approaching editors. Get to know as many freelancers as you can. Chances are if you make buddies in the freelance community (and how hard is that when you have comics in common?), they'll speak to editors about you. Either in passing or to tell some exaggerated story about you ("Man, you shoulda heard what he asked Claudia Christian at San Diego."), or even to recommend you for work. That forms a connection with an editor. You know someone they know. They'll be able to remember you; "Oh, the guy who got bitch-slapped by that chick on Babylon 5."

Anyhow, that's some of the stuff I used to get where I am. And where am I? Well, currently I'm heading to be a writer-editor at CrossGen. So maybe I'll have more advice from the other side of that relationship in a future article.



FIN FANG FOOM VS COOKIE MONSTER

Taking Your Comics to the People

How Independent Creators Can Awaken the Outside World

by KLAUS

As an independent or small press cartoonist, you may have realized that your audience is marginal. The independent market is only a small portion of the entire comics-industry pie, and the audience that reads Superman is not usually the same audience that reads Cynical Man. The question becomes, ultimately, WHO is my audience?

Consider this: Just because you are producing your work in the comics medium doesn't necessarily mean your project will appeal to a comics reading audience.

If this proposition rings true to you, then here are some suggestions on how to take your comics to the "non-comics" public. The following are not merely pie-in-the-sky ideas, but methods that have been used by many indie creators that we know today. Consider this not just a list of tips, but also a brief compendium of those who've bravely and creatively gone before you.

Schools and Libraries.

With the all-important ISBN and its cohort the bar code, your graphic novel is fit for libraries nationwide. It is as legit as that copy of Huckleberry Finn. Now that you've heard it, believe it. All it takes to

get your book in a library is to fill out the available request forms or just talk to the librarian face-to-face. If you've created a project that may be of educational value, like a comics adaptation of Huckleberry Finn, then you may be able to get your work in schools. Educators have realized in recent years that comics and sequential picture stories are effective in teaching children to read. They've also been used in adult literacy programs with good results. So, if you've just completed your comic strip retelling of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, it will most likely get a warmer welcome on a fourth-grade bookshelf than in your local comics retailer.

Example: Gareth Hinds' faithful adaptation of Beowulf is available to schools and libraries via his web site, www.thecomic.com.

Literary journals and zines.

A writer's resource book can aid you in finding an appropriate home for your indie project. The Novel and Short Story Writers Market (Writer's Digest Books) is published every year, and inside you'll find thousands of listings for publishers both big and small. You may see some old familiar companies—like Dark Horse Comics—snuggled within. It is important to get the latest edition, as many listings

change markedly from year to year.

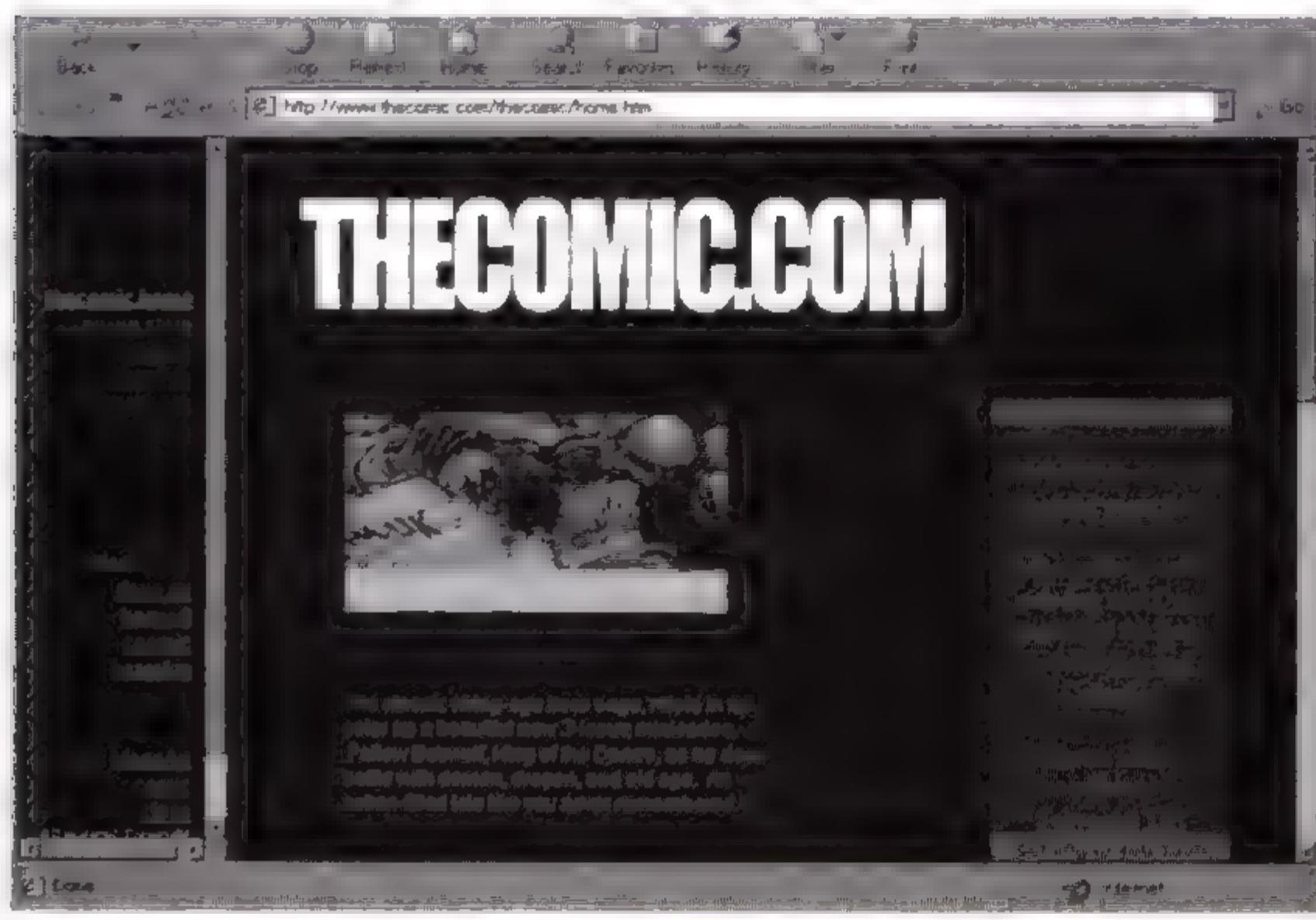
Many of the smaller literary publications are open to short form comics contributions. Some already take artwork submissions—and comics could be a next step in that direction. If you see a listing that interests you, but they don't currently take comics submissions, then send a query letter and ask if they are open to the idea. Including samples doesn't hurt. The Gen X and Y audience is, as a whole, more open to the idea of Comics-as-Art. As for zines, it is safe to say that many will publish anything that interests them (within the context of their theme). And with the advent of our friend the Internet and the "e-zine," page space is a thing of the past.

Example of a literary magazine that



www.legion-studios.com

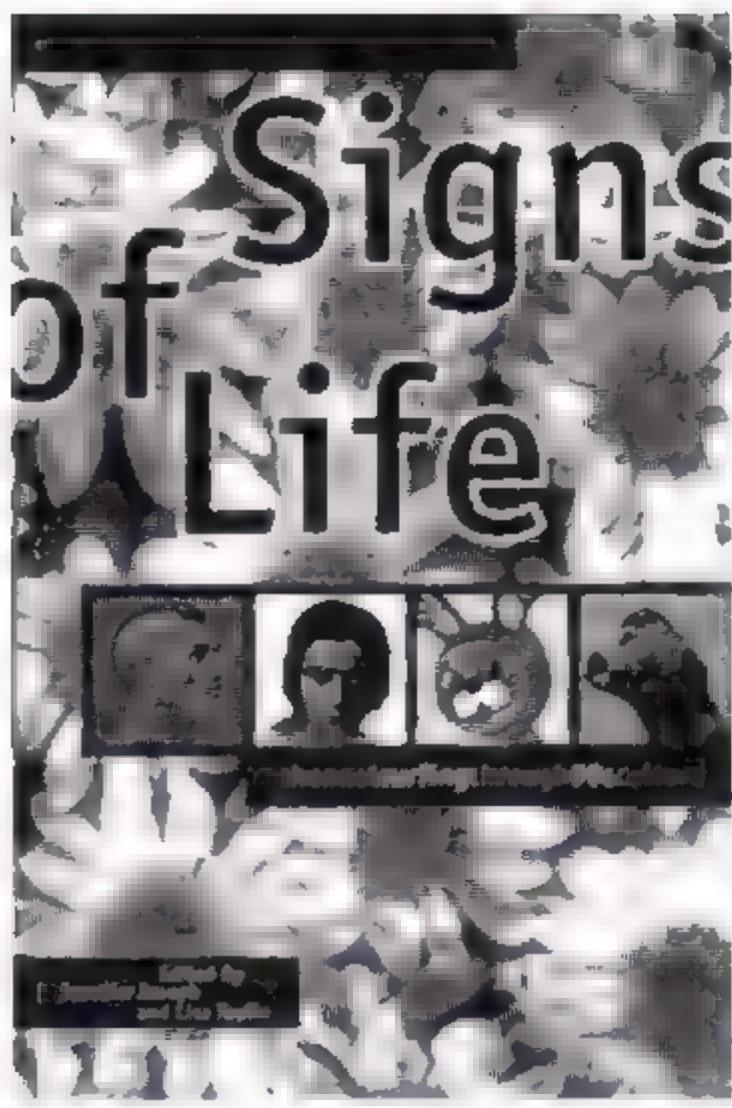
publishes comics: The Legion Studios "e-magazine" (www.legion-studios.com) publishes literary writing, music and film reviews, and their own weekly comic strip. They are open to contributor submissions.



www.thecomic.com



www.bluelinepro.com



such as short stories, screenplays, and comics.

Examples of literary anthologies that have published comics contributions: Avant-Pop: Fiction For a Daydream Nation (Black Ice Books), and Signs of Life: Channel Surfing Through 90s Culture (manic d press).

Think locally, act locally.

World domination is a long way off, so in the meantime, your best shot at recognition is your nearest metropolitan area. Take your books, issues, and/or mini-

comics to the local comic book shops—THEN go to all the bookstores. See if they're open to public readings or signings. Local authors are usually treated with enthusiasm. Some coffee bars and hangouts still have open mikes. Shmooze. Make friends. See if you can do a live reading of your comics while slides of your work are projected behind you. Get your other art friends involved. See if local musicians would like to accompany you. Make fliers and promote your show. Get the local press involved. You may feel you're being treated like a novelty, but just stay focused. This is your opportunity to trick the public into liking your comics.

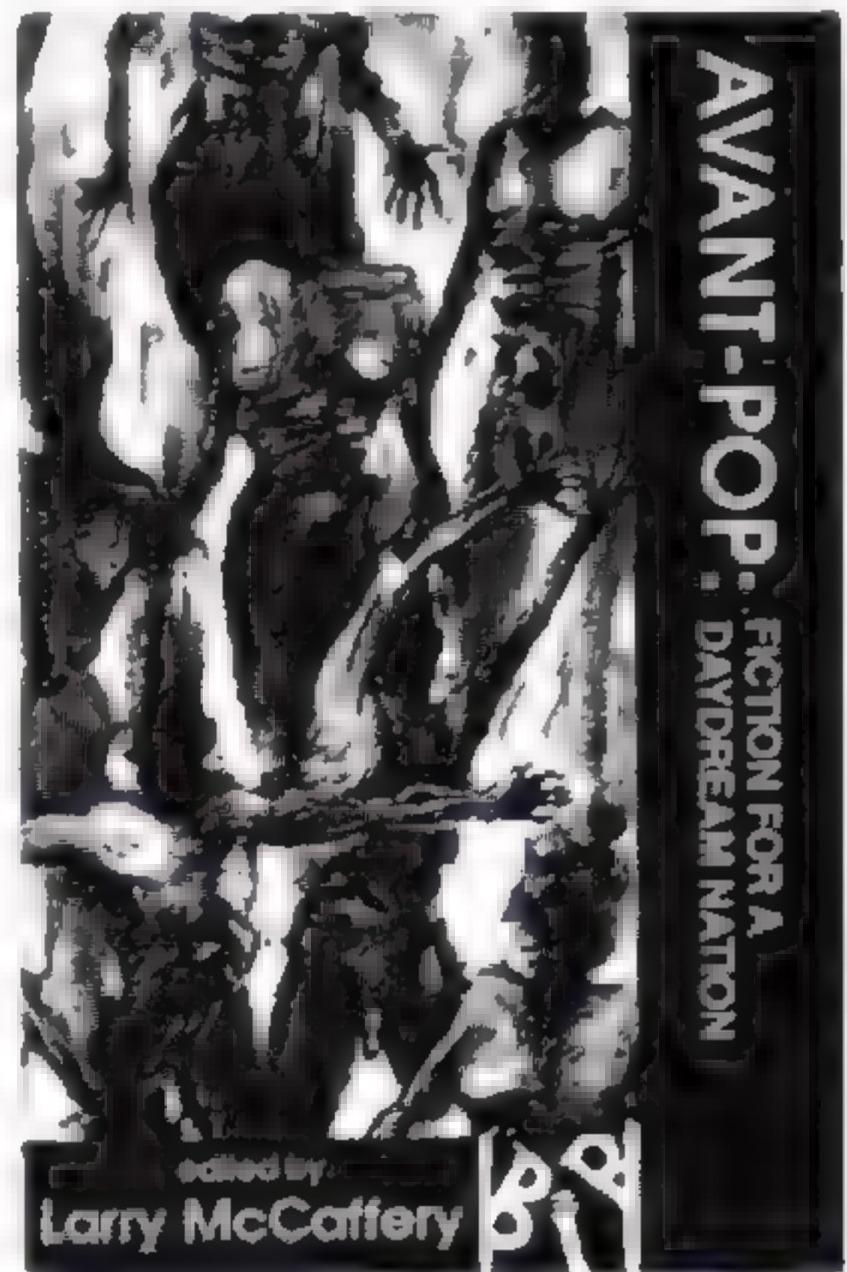
And if you're really ambitious, contact your local arts council and find out how receptive they are to comic book projects. In this context, you'll really have to sell yourself, but it could mean grant money. Many of these types of projects are community-focused, so you may have to gear your project in that direction. Sometimes just making connections with artists working in different fields can open opportunities for you, thus providing new venues for your comics.

Examples: Artist Evan Dorkin has conducted live readings in New York, with the accompanying artwork slide-projected behind. And artist Jef Czekaj has written his own article about how to get grant money for comics, taken from his personal experiences.

There is no invisible wall keeping comics

artists from expanding into the "non-comics" world. The only barriers are public ignorance and your own trepidation. Get out there. Raze the walls. Take your comics to the people.

Klaus

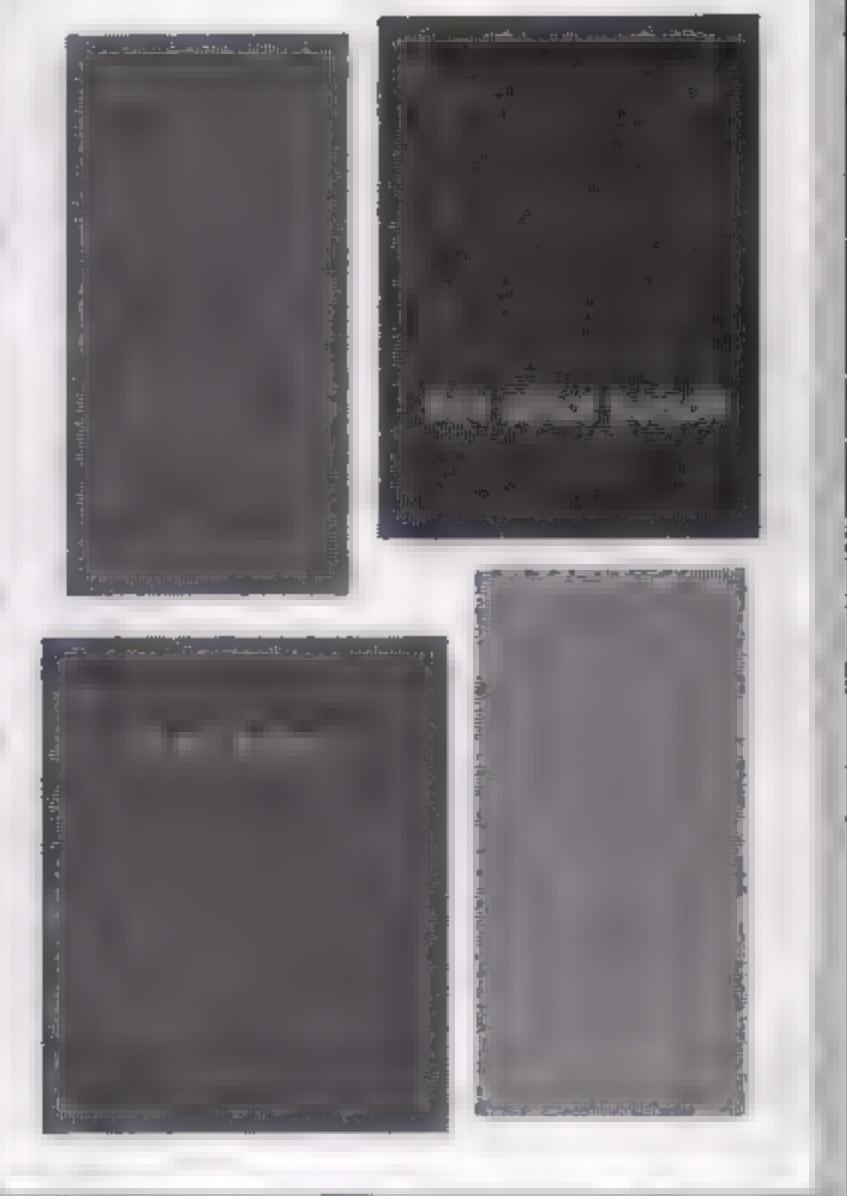


How to be an Amateur Professional—or—Got No Money? Go Mini.

The mini-comic can be a powerful promotional tool that can also be made available for sale. Take your rent or grocery money to your local print shop and create your own black and white comic book on 8.5" x 11" paper. Print the wraparound cover on index-card-weight colored paper, fold and staple at home. Viola, you're published. In the world of small press, the mini-comic is a legitimate presence. If your work is strong, it will be noticed by your audience, magazines like Comics Journal, other higher-tiered artists, and publishers alike. A well-done mini-comic can be very attractive, and with the accessibility of computer programs like Corel Draw and Photoshop, mini-comics can look more professional than ever before.

Slip your mini-comics in the mail to everyone you can think of. Take out ads in magazines to sell them for a buck or two a pop. Use mini's any time you think you can make a connection.

Example: Alex Robinson first published Box Office Poison as a series of mini-comics before getting picked up by Antarctic Press. Then he won the Eisner Award. Box Office Poison is now available as a graphic novel published by Top Shelf Productions.



PREMIUM
STANDARD



Letters Forum

All letters received will be considered for publication. Letters published will be done so as received in regards to spelling, punctuation, etc. - however, letters may be edited for length, language, and/or other considerations. All letters should be signed by the writer, as well as including the writer's legibly printed name, address, and contact numbers (phone, fax, e-mail). Opinions expressed are those of their respective letter writers, and not necessarily shared by Blue Line. While open as a critical forum, it is Blue Line's hope and intention that correspondence maintains constructive and positive elements of criticism. Simple name calling, rumor mongering, and/or maliciousness is not of interest. Unless our editor does it.

Please send your e-mail missives to sketchletters@bluelinepro.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Hi.

I have been reading Sketch for about a year now and think its great. Thank you for producing it. Recently I have been very busy with everything in my life. It has been difficult to juggle all of my projects, work and my social and domestic life. I really wish there were more time in the day. But since there isn't, I thought I might suggest an article for someone to write over there at Sketch. I would be interested in knowing how professionals schedule their day including everything from seeding themselves to how much time they spend in the studio.

Thanks!

Robert Tritthardt

Don't worry Robert. The problem of having not enough time isn't exclusive. If you've read this issue's Frank Cho interview or some of our previous talks with the Kubert brothers, Ed McGuinness, or Bill Tucci, I think you'll see that each professional determines their schedule individually, depending on the life style they live.

I try to separate my studio time between working on Sketch magazine, developing new products, and my "creative time" working on Blood and Roses and Race Danger. I agree with you, I'm always interested in knowing how other professionals handle their time.

Bob

Bob

I am writing from London, England and have just read the profile on George Perez. Andy Mangels profile mentions that he has published a book called *The Perez Archives*. Do you have any information on its availability or how I may find out? Thanking you in advance.

Mike Osborne

I interrupted the busy schedule of Andy Mangels - a guy who certainly knows his Perez - to find out where to locate a copy of his Perez Archives. You should check with the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

at www.cbldf.org for a copy, but please hurry, as there is a limited quantity available.

Andy's hustling away with work at Anime Invasion, Dreamwatch, and Farscape magazine, as well as new Star Trek novels, while George is hustling with CrossGen...let's hope these gents can get together at some time in the future for an Archives follow-up.

Thanks for writing us, Mike - we at Sketch wish the very best to all our friends in England. Good luck with obtaining a copy

F

Dear Bob,

THANK YOU EVER SO MUCH for the absolutely EXCELLENT interview with my FAVORITE comic artist of all time, George Perez. I can spot his work with a single blink of the eye, and I absolutely ADORE what he does. He is PERFECT! (Now if we could have an interview with Marv Wolfman, I'd be in heaven!)

I have a question for Aaron Hubrich regarding his "Coloring Over Pencils" piece (page 60, Sketch #10). Why use Adobe Photoshop (a raster application) rather than Adobe Illustrator (a vector graphics application)? Both have the same tools and the same Color technology, so wouldn't it make more sense to use Illustrator? Just curious. I'd be interested to see a follow up article "Coloring Over Pencils II" using Adobe Illustrator, perhaps on a Macintosh.

Anyway, that's it for me.

Thanks again!

Christine Taylor
San Jose, California

When you scan in graphics, they become raster images. It is better to use a program that specializes in raster graphics...in my opinion that program is Photoshop. You can make some awesome graphics in Illustrator and many other vector based programs, but you'll have a tough time making it look smooth. If you scan in your image, place it in Illustrator, and then add color to it...you'll find that it will be quite a task to make it look right. Sure, you could trace the image, but will it look just like that scanned image?

Illustrator is best used for making "flat" line art graphics. Ex: logos, clip art, web based stuff. You want to use the right program for the job: "Photoshop" is what it is - it's the best program to do high-end art - it gives you the most control over your image. "Illustrator" is for graphics, logos, web images, and some layout. "Quark Xpress", "Adobe InDesign", and "Adobe Pagemaker" are examples of programs used to lay out your graphics and art.

You can do a lot of cool things in all of these programs, but don't waste your time trying to find a way to make one program work like another: try using the "magic wand" in Illustrator - sorry, you can't. Try typing in Photoshop - not a good idea. Of course you can, but do you really want to when you could just drop into a more capable program? These are the things designers have to decide on a daily basis. Hope I was some help.

Aaron

[In response to letter answered in issue #11 about *CEREBUS GUIDE TO SELF PUBLISHING* published by Dave Sim.]

M2,

Well after this discouraging email, I decided out of desperation to scrounging around the web far and wide. The on place that actually had it was <http://www.booksncomics.co.uk>. The website is a little inconvenient, you don't just point and click to get what you want, but the important thing is that they have it. And I couldn't even believe how much of a pain it was to track it down. But maybe you can pass along the word to other weary readers who wish to grab a copy.

Thanks for the help,
Chris Hilbig

Hi Chris,

Good detective work Chris! The elusive Cerebus book has finally been found. Why, if it weren't for those pesky kids, that book would be in the Bahamas enjoying the good life...

M2

Bob Hickey,

I just received Sketch #10, and I was horrified by the errors in it... not to mention the actual cover! What on earth is a "VEHICAL"? Is that poetic license for the word "VEHICLE"? On the inside cover, where it says "Attention Creators!" "YOUR" should be "YOU'RE" (a conjunction of YOU and ARE). "LETTER'S" should be "LETTERS" (because the apostrophe s shows ownership, as if the word LETTER owns something). I didn't bother to read the rest of it, and will give it away or throw it away. What a mess!

I hope you are not completely insulted, but I feel it's URGENT to point out those BLARING errors. As George Pérez told me himself, if there's even just one error, it undermines the integrity of the entire publication, and renders the whole thing unreliable. How did I get into the position where George told this to me? Well, that's because I'm the colorist, editor, and designer in chief of THE GEORGE PEREZ NEWSLETTER.

Thanks,
Marcus Mebes

I feel that I need to respond to this letter if only because it seems that I made most of the mistakes that appeared in issue #10.

When it comes to your newsletter, if you haven't yet experienced the difficulties, frustration, and financial burn of dealing with things that are sometimes unable to be controlled, I hope you never have to. Sketch #10 was very late - to say the least - and, as

a relatively small publisher, I was feeling the heat. I knew that every day the magazine was late it was costing us money. Even though we checked it over several times, we certainly missed some glaring errors in the rush to finally push the issue through. No excuse - in this business, a cool head must prevail.

I apologize to Mr. Perez and Mr. Mangels, who counted on us to present their piece in a more professional fashion.

Did we make mistakes: yes.

Are we making changes to keep from making the same mistakes: most definitely.

Marcus, you work on a nice magazine. I wish you the best.

*Take care,
Bob*

Hello Marcus,

We're not insulted at all - embarrassed, but not insulted. We're always looking for feedback, and we're always looking to improve, even when the feedback is positive.

As Mr. Perez told you, reliability is certainly important, but I don't believe our integrity has been compromised. Typos, sloppy as they are, pop up regularly in a variety of publications. We're sorry that the typos ruined the issue for you, but glad that most of our other readers - new and old - were able to sidestep the errors, and enjoy the interview and insights into the talent and varied interests of Mr. Perez. I'm sure our readership will be pleased with the creator interviews Sketch has coming in 2002.

as we enter another year of quality (with the occasional typo) publication.

Issue # 10 was, indeed, sloppy. We're making changes to make certain we don't repeat the same mistakes. This issue's excellent Frank Cho piece, as well as last issue's talk with the ultra-talented Kubert brothers, should avoid any further disappointment to our Sketch interview fans.

Thanks for bringing your newsletter to my attention, Marcus. I was unaware of it but I really want to check it out, and I'm sure that the many other Perez fans out there will as well. Something Perez fans should definitely be picking up is the Perez Archives book mentioned previously - and don't fail to look around the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund site when you're ordering!

F

Those stepping up this issue to answer questions:

- Bob / Bob Hickey

- M² / Mike Maydak

Flint / Flint Henry

- Aaron / Aaron Hubrich

As always we try to pass the letters along to those of us that have the most knowledge of the subject that your letter is referring to. And, if all else fails we leave it to our most trusted senior editor Flint Henry (That's why he gets paid the big bucks).

Sketch Mail

Send in your illustrated envelope and you may win a prize!



Inking the Figure part 1

by Chris Dreier, professional inker

with Jacob Paplham, semi-professional phonics-monkey
and Mike Maydak, just a plain monkey

I still can't believe I'm working for Dark Horse Comics and getting paid for it. I mean, I love inking so much I'd do it for free... but don't tell Dark Horse that. Right now I'm inking Mel Rubi's pencils on the new *Angel* four issue miniseries. Let me tell you, Mel knows how to craft a page, which makes my job that much easier. It's pros like Mel who make hacks like me look good.

Anyway, back to inking with *Angel*. Examining the following panels of *Angel* is a good way to learn a bit more about inking. The variety of characters in the book provides an opportunity to use different tools and different approaches to inking.

The Approach

The way I look at inking a figure can be summed up in one word: organic. When inking figures, I try to capture this 'real' or soft look by using a brush. There are several different kinds of brushes to choose from. Personally, I prefer the Winsor & Newton Finest Sable Series 7, size 1. Sometimes I use a size 2, but not very often. For ink, Rapidograph Ultradraw 3085-F is my brand, but you go ahead and choose whatever brand makes you happy. Now, let's start by looking at *Angel* and some other "normal" looking people.



Example 1 pencils.



Example 1 inks.

Example 1

Here we have *Angel* lunging away from a smashed car. You can see from the pencils that Mel has kept his line weights thin. This is good for the inker because it cuts down on the amount of pencil lead that is actually put to the page. This allows more space to work with, thus making it easier to ink.

First off, notice the different line weights that I added. *Angel*'s boot on the bottom of the page has thicker contour lines than his arm reaching back (Ex. A). This creates depth and distance, and makes his boot look larger and closer.



Ex. A

Angel™ & © 2001 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. TM designates a trademark of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Artwork is © 2001 Dark Horse Comics, Inc.

At the top we can see Angel turning into a vampire. Notice how the line weights create the shape of his face even more than the pencils do (Ex. B).



Ex. B



Ex C

Remember that even when Angel is in freaked-out vampire-form, he is still organic. Therefore, he should be inked with a brush. His clothes, due to their wrinkles and folds, are organic in nature and should also be inked with a brush. With just one brush stroke you can create a line that goes from thin to thick and back again to show those folds (Ex. C).

The background and debris, however, are not organic, and are done with different tools. Check future articles for that information.



Example 2 pencils.



Example 2 inks

Example 2

In the last panel, Angel is emerging from a destroyed bus stop. I love this panel—but in a strictly platonic way, I assure you. Take a look at his chin. In the pencils the line that defines his chin is linear, while in the inks a thick line runs the length of his jaw (Ex. D). This pulls his head away from his chest, and pushes his torso back just a little.



Ex. D





Example 3 pencils.

Example 3

On this page, I used a nib to ink the belt buckles, cell phone and holder, and the little buckles on his vest (Ex. E). The rest is brush.



Ex E

This is a good page to start talking about **feathering**. Feathering is used to create a smooth transition from a solid black area into white. Feathering can also show shape. For example, in the second panel you can see how the feathering that comes from the black areas on his arms is arched, like it is bending around the arm's muscles (Ex. F). The other type of feathering really only shows shape. These feathers can range from thin to thick and back to thin again (Ex. G), or thick to thin point. You can also see these types of examples on the first two pages.

While a brush is more often than not ideal for inking figures, there is a limit to what a brush is capable of. At these times, you'll need something else to finish the job. Might I suggest a crow quill? Well, too bad, I just did.



Ex F

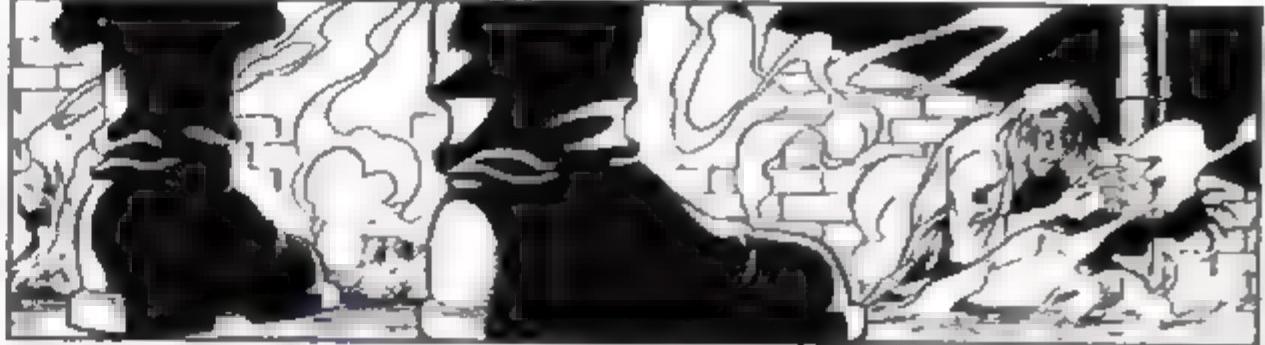


Ex G

Ok, ok. Bob is wrapping up this issue so next issue we'll discuss snake woman and molten monsters.

If you have any questions drop me a line at
ChrisD@bluelinepro.com

Chris



Example 3 inks.

TIPS FROM SIZER FOR BETTER COLOR IN Comics



by Paul Sizer

Color is a science, but not exclusively. There are techniques and theories behind how color works, but color also needs to be about feeling and emotion, especially in the comics medium. That being said lets take a look at some things comic artists should know about color and how to use it intelligently. With PhotoShop and other painting programs, suddenly everyone is now a colorist. The same thing happened when PageMaker first came out; suddenly everyone was a graphic designer because they could put words and pictures together and make a brochure on their desktop publishing system. The same thing happened in comics coloring, and for a while the market was flooded with every single book looking like a really bad airbrush technique manual, everything rendered with every special effect that existed in a pull down menu within PhotoShop. And it looked REALLY BAD!

I don't know everything about coloring, and there is no "one right way" to color, but I've learned some things that make coloring work and enhance artwork rather than overwhelming it. Plus, I think that artists should know how to talk intelligently about what they do, whether it be lettering, inking or coloring, whatever... so here are some basics about color theory, and some techniques I use to make color work for me, not against me.

THE MIGHTY COLOR WHEEL

Oh sure, you made one of these in art class in the third grade, but it's time to revisit this old friend! Knowing the relationships between color helps you make better color decisions, and solves some common mistakes colorists make when choosing color schemes. (Example 1) We all know the PRIMARY COLORS (red, yellow and blue), and the SECONDARY COLORS (orange, green, and purple), but notice that each group's colors are equidistant from each other on the wheel. You can therefore find TERTIARY TRIADS (third level colors made by mixing a primary and secondary color) by finding the other equidistant color triangles on the wheel (red-orange, yellow-green, and blue-violet, for example). ANALOGOUS COLORS are basically colors that exist next to one another on the wheel. COMPLEMENTARY COLORS are colors that exist directly across from each other on the color wheel. A cool thing about complementary colors is that all complements mix to form neutral grays of differing tones. A natural way to dull any color is to start mixing it with its complement. This will achieve a more natural looking shading or dark area in coloring, rather than just adding black to a color. Complements do have the visual tendency to "vibrate" when put right next to one another, so use or watch out for that effect.

OK, file this info and let's get to some techniques!



Example 1

FLAT COLOR THEORY

Flat color is probably the most basic approach to coloring, but its simplicity is often times overlooked. When people see flat color, it's usually in anime-type drawings or with animation-style rendering. I've been experimenting with flat color techniques on coloring work for LITTLE WHITE MOUSE for a while now, and I've been happy with the results.

Interestingly, when I get uncolored pin-up art from pros for my book, the most common request from them is: "Keep the coloring simple!" Here are a few examples of pro pin-up artwork I've colored:

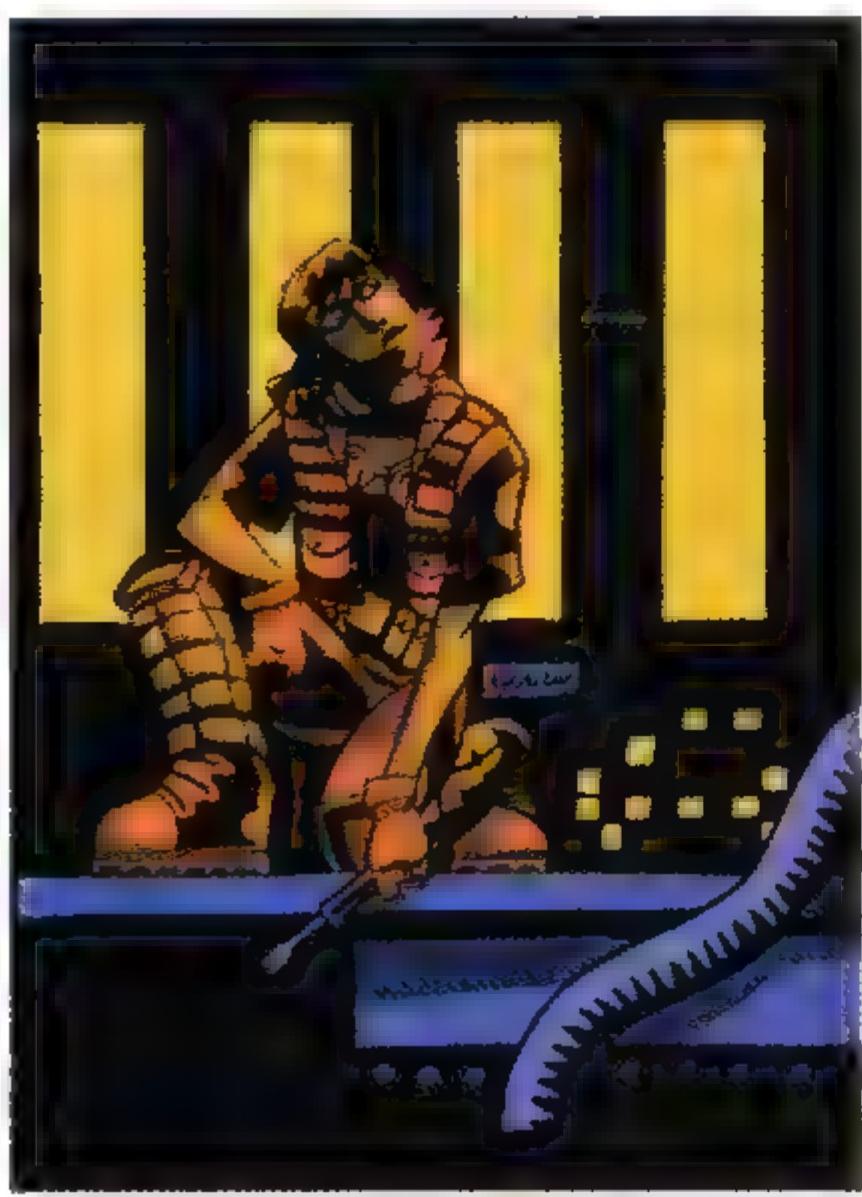
In each case I worked to keep the coloring simple and functional, and let the art be the main focus. It must have worked, because none of these guys have put a price on my head for crimes against color (at least, none that I know of...).



DARROW



SPROUSE



OEMING



Example 2

FLAT COLORING TECHNIQUES:

Gear used: Photoshop 6.0, Wacom Tablet, G4 Mac

1. First I scan my black and white art at 100% size at 600 dpi and save it as a bitmap TIFF file. (I scan the artwork at this higher dpi to catch as much detail as possible, then reduce it down to 300 dpi before I actually color it.) Before I convert the scan to a color mode, I size it as a bitmap, getting it to the actual size and dpi I want it to be. Then I convert it to grayscale, then to CMYK color mode. If you're coloring for something that's going to actually be 4-color process printed, you should work in CMYK always! Plus, CMYK makes colors by adding them together (more like when you mix paints), which to me is easier to visualize than RGB, which creates colors by taking them away from each other. (Example 2)



Example 3

2. Next, I take my Paint Bucket Fill Tool and set its tolerance to 2, the Anti-aliasing option OFF, opacity at 100% and its mode to "Darken". I don't usually use layers as much as some colorists, so for this demo, I'm working right on my line art. The "Darken" mode allows you to add colors without messing with the darker colors, and since your line work is black, there usually aren't any colors darker than that. I then take my Paint Bucket and fill in all the areas of the art with flat color. Since my work is usually pretty tight and there aren't a lot of sketchy areas, I can fill most of the drawing with the Paint Bucket. If there are open areas I take my Pencil Tool, set to the same parameters as the paint bucket, and just close off any open spaces with the color I'm using to make them fill-able. (Example 3)

3. Then, with the areas of the art filled with even color, I can take the Magic Wand Tool, set the tolerance to 2 and select these areas. I usually work on same areas of color at the same time, so by holding down the "Shift" key (on the Mac) I can select multiple areas at once to color. Once these areas are selected I use my Pencil Tool, set to "Darken," to begin laying in shaded areas and contours. If the shadow is pretty simple I'll use a big pencil size and sweep along the edge. Since the areas are selected, I don't have to worry about affecting the other areas or lines around it! For more complex or intricate shadow forms, I'll use a smaller pencil size to draw out the contour of the shadow, then Paint Bucket fill things from there. While the areas are selected I'll also do any highlights, switching the pencil mode to "Lighten". I usually try to highlight with a lighter version of the base color, rather than just white, because it gives a more natural look. (Example 4)



Example 4

4. For this next example I've done the same set-up, but instead of working with the Pencil Tool I used the Airbrush Tool to do my shading and highlighting. This gives a more rendered feeling to the art. I still try to not get obnoxious with the blending and shading, keeping it simple and clean. On flesh and material I'll use a softer airbrush setting, and for metal and synthetic fabrics I use a harder brush to get that high reflective shine. (Example 5)



Example 5

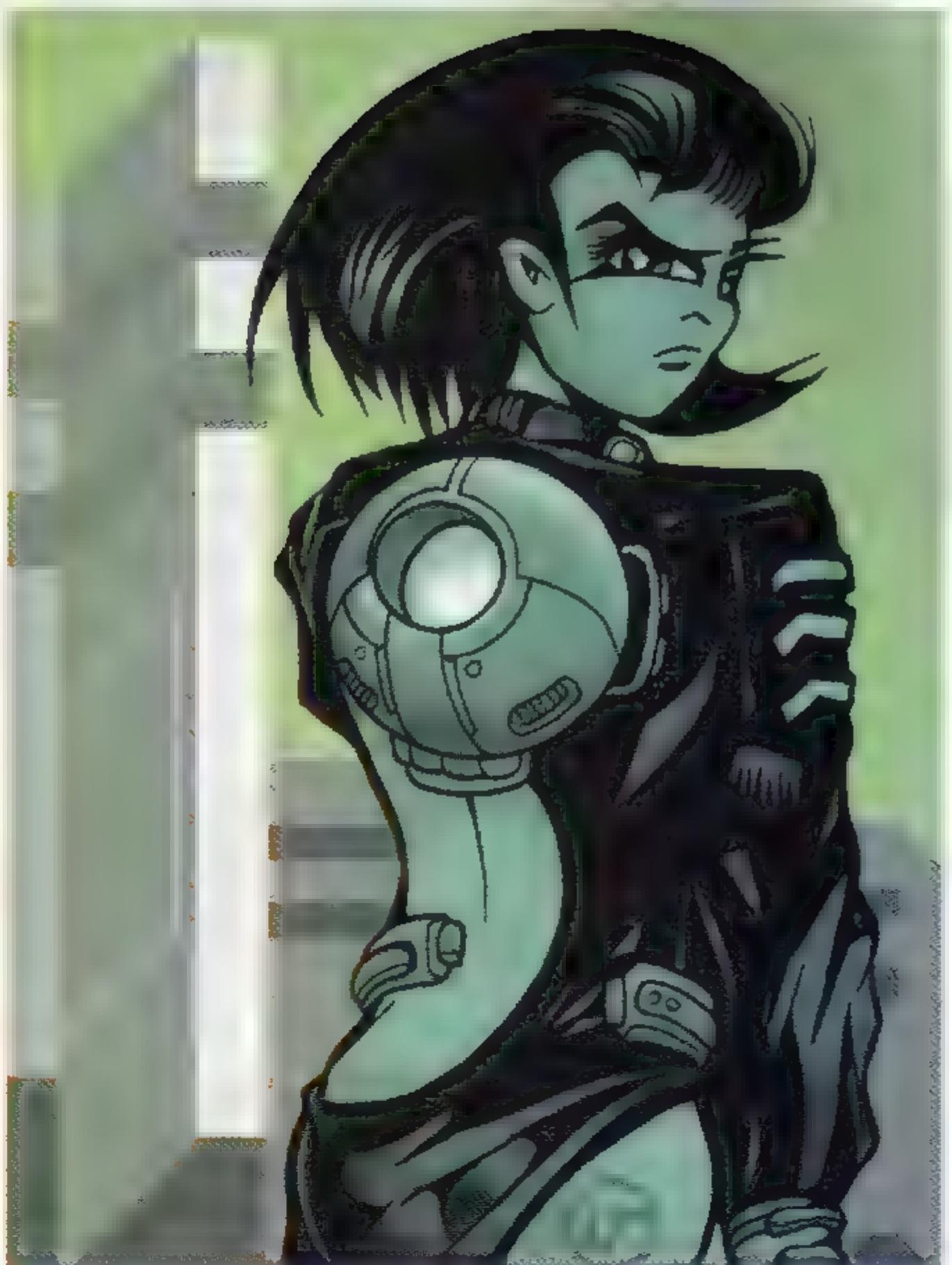


Example 6

5. On these examples, different color schemes are shown achieving different results. In Example 6, we see the background using a more analogous color scheme, which cools down the composition. On Example 7, the red-orange based background is complementary to the greens of the figure, and it pushes the entire composition to the front and makes it more active! And in Example 8, I've made the entire color scheme nearly monochromatic, which gives a kind of stylized, duotone look.



Example 7



Example 8



Example 9

6. On Example 9, I decided to go full out and attempt a photo-type rendered color job. While there are some areas I'm pretty happy with, this kind of technique would be way over the top for an entire book, if not only for the sheer amount of time it would take. My coloring decisions (and those of most artists I know) are usually a combination of aesthetic and time constraint considerations. As I said above, there is no "correct" way to color comics. In fact, I don't think there should be just one way to do it. I learned from multiple sources and from working in traditional media like gouache and acrylics way before I jumped on board a computer. Take what I show in this demo and mix it with the other coloring articles you read. Somewhere in there you will find a technique that works best for the artwork you're coloring. My best overall advice is to keep things simple and let the colors work like they are meant to. Being smart about color theory makes you a better colorist and a better artist!

For my picks on really great coloring on current comic titles, check out the work of Edgar Delgado in Humberto Ramos' *OUT THERE*, Laura Depuy on *PLANETARY* and *THE AUTHORITY*, and Patricia Mulvihill on *100 BULLETS*. All good examples of colorists who know what they're doing!

You can contact Paul at
Pauls@bluelinepro.com

Digital Coloring: Be A Super Hero Photoshop User!

by Aaron Hübrich

"Time is money." I bet you've heard that before. How will you get yourself above the crowd when it comes down to it? To get the gig, you've got to be good – to keep the gig, you've got to be faster than the next guy who's as good as you! Fortunately, the time frame you will be working with will be set by the publisher, or the person you are working for. Do you think you can get it done on time? Maybe the other guy can get it done a day or two earlier...how are they so fast? I know how, and I'm going to show you how to impress your friends by becoming a Super Hero!

These time saving shortcuts are for Photoshop 5.0 through 6.0. What I'm going to show you will help you with your digital coloring, but I would encourage everyone to learn more shortcuts as you grow more comfortable using Photoshop. What lies ahead is just touching the surface of what you can learn to help speed up your process, but once you learn just a few of these shortcuts, you'll start saving time immediately! All these techniques are public knowledge, but I really don't think that many new (or even veteran) Photoshop users are comfortable using shortcuts. People tend to be creatures of habit, but with a little help, you can become more powerful than a mere mortal Photoshop user...You can become a Super Hero Photoshop User!

• Super Hero Tool Shortcuts:

Photoshop has a letter assigned to it. If you want to select a particular tool, just type the letter. Example: "m" for marquee tool, "e" for the eraser tool, etc. The cool thing about this is that once you get used to working without stopping and grabbing a tool, you can just press a key. This will make you much faster.

• Super Hero Brush Shortcuts:

Change your brush size on-the-fly by using the less than (<) and greater than (>) symbols to select the first and last brush. Left bracket ([]) and right bracket (]) decrease and increase the current brush size you are using. Shift-[and Shift-] decrease and increase the hardness of the current brush. Think fast!

"F5" is the Shortcut for your brushes (Photoshop 5.0 through 5.5). This will make your brushes appear or disappear on your screen without having to go to a menu.

• Super Hero Move Tool Shortcuts:

Hold down (Cmd – for Mac users) (Ctrl – for PC users). This will let you move your page around without have to click on another tool.

• Super Hero Palette Shortcuts:

Every palette has a keystroke assigned to it, too. F5 through F9 will help you recall all your palettes. Learn these because it will allow you to work without cluttering up your screen.

If your palettes are in the way just hit the tab key, and they'll disappear. If you want them back, just hit tab again to show them all.

• Super Hero Fill Command Shortcuts:

The bucket tool is for sissies. More on this later...

• Super Hero Opacity Shortcuts:

If you type a single number, the number will change in 10% increments. If you type two numbers quickly, the opacity will change by 1% increments. Example: if you press "4", you will get "40%". If you press "44" quickly, you will get "44%".

• Tool Letter Shortcuts:

Just type a letter, and your tool will magically appear. This will save your screen from getting cluttered up with a bunch of windows that aren't needed.



Rectangular Marquee	"M"
Elliptical Marquee	"M"
Move	"V"
Lasso	"L"
Polygonal Lasso	"L"
Magnetic Lasso	"L"
Magic Wand	"W"
Crop	"C"
Slice	"K" (6.0)
Slice Select	"K" (6.0)
Airbrush	"J" (6.0 / 5.5)
	"A" (5.0)
Paintbrush	"B"
Pencil	"B" (6.0)
	"N" (5.5)
	"Y" (5.0)
Clone Stamp	"S"
Pattern Stamp	"S"
History Brush	"Y" (6.0 / 5.5)
Art History Brush	"Y" (6.0 / 5.5)
Eraser	"E"
Magic Eraser	"E" (6.0 / 5.5)
Background Eraser	"E" (6.0 / 5.5)
Gradient	"G"
Bucket	"G" (6.0)
	"K" (5.5 / 5.0)
Blur	"R"
Sharpen	"R"
Smudge	"R"
Dodge	"O"
Burn	"O"
Sponge	"O"
Type	"T"
Pen	"P"
Freeform Pen	"P"
Add Anchor Point	"+"
Delete Anchor Point	"-"
Eyedropper	"I"
Hand	"H"
Zoom	"Z"
Default Colors	"D"
Exchange Colors	"X"
Toggle Quick Mask	"Q"
Cycle Screen Modes	"F"

• Super Hero Quick Tips...

Zoom In:

Mac: Cmd and + / Win: Ctrl and +

Zoom Out:

Mac: Cmd and - / Win: Ctrl and -

• Paint and Draw in a straight line:

Hold the Shift Key and click! You can use this quick and easy step to draw a straight line with just about any tool that draws!

• Save your work!

Mac: Cmd and S / Win: Ctrl and S

• Undo or Redo:

Mac: Cmd and Z / Win: Ctrl and Z

• Do a Quick Fill! Never use the Bucket Tool again! Make sure your area is selected and press...

Mac: Option and Delete

Win: Alt and Backspace

• Select All:

Mac: Cmd and A / Win: Ctrl and A

• Deselect:

Mac: Cmd and D / Win: Ctrl and D

• Move A Selection Marquee 1 Pixel:

Arrow Keys (Mac and Win)

• Move a Selection marquee 10 Pixels:

Shift and Arrow Keys (Mac and Win)

• Toggle between Polygonal Lasso and Lasso Tool:

Mac: Option and drag / Win: Alt and drag

• Show or Hide the Swatches Palette: F6

• Show or Hide the Brushes Palette: F5

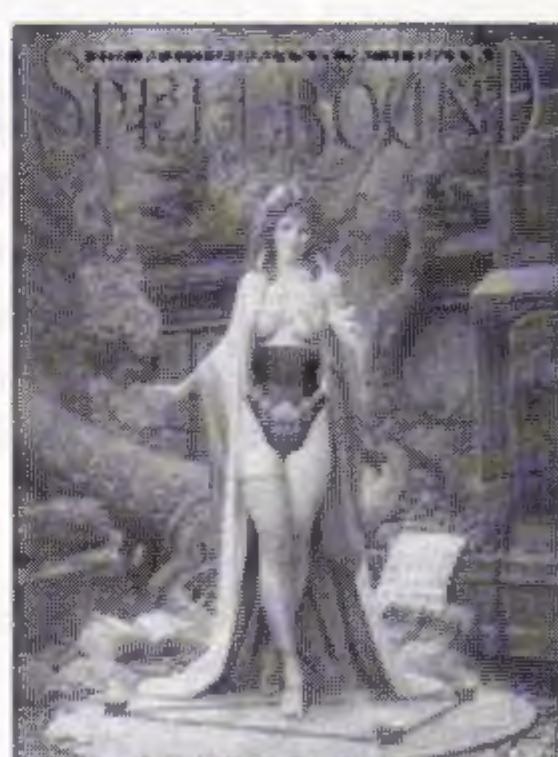
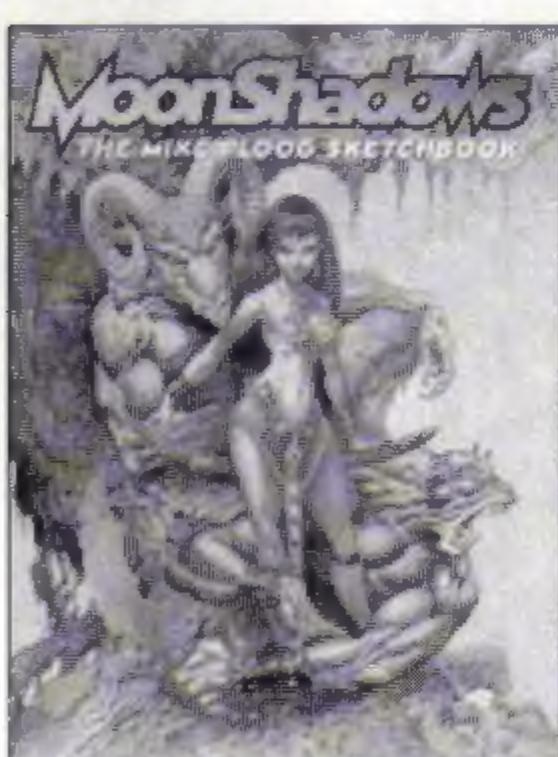
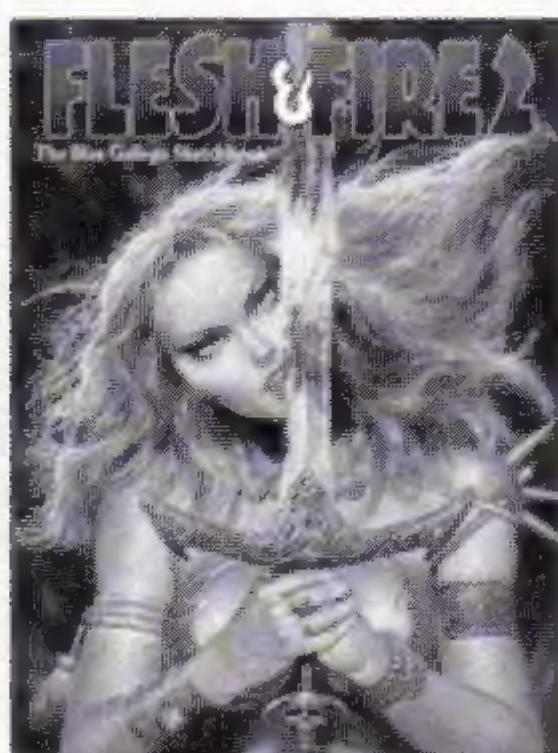
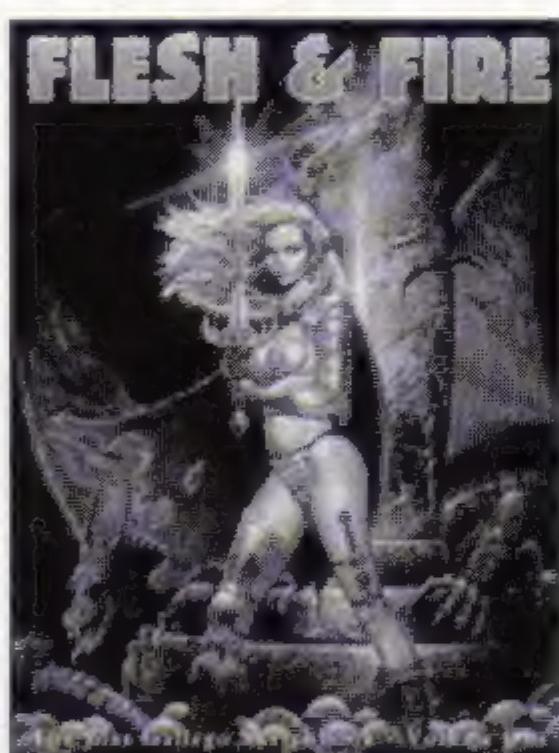
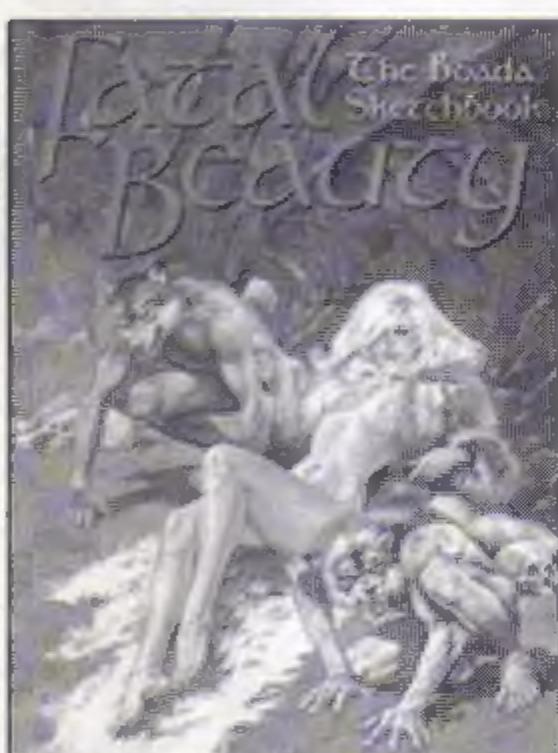
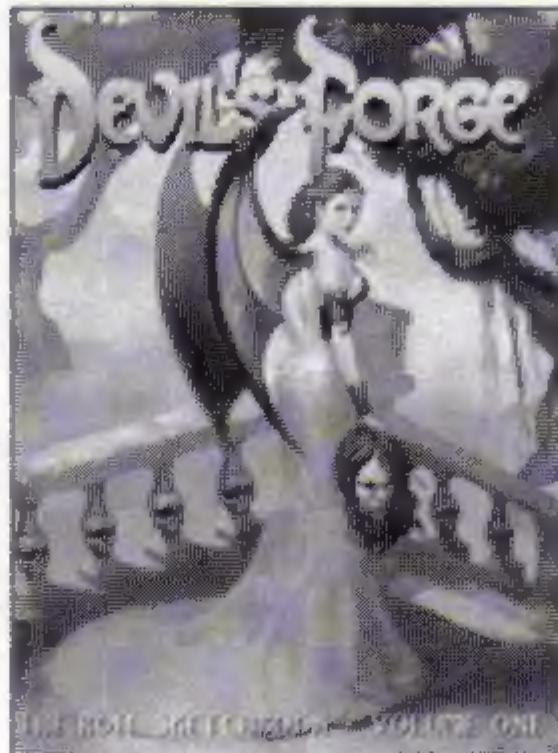
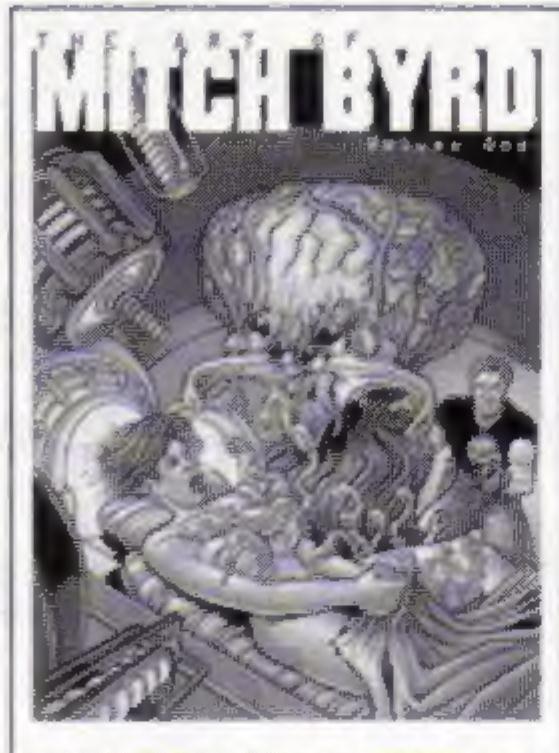
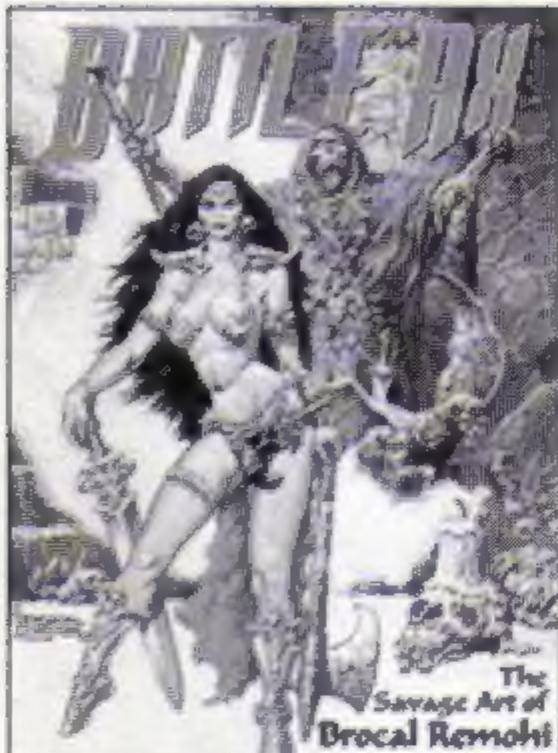
• Show or Hide the Layers Palette: F7

If you know any great tips for speeding up your coloring, let's hear it! I wouldn't expect everyone to memorize all the speed tips I have listed here. Learn them as you go along, picking up some here and there - or else you'll get frustrated and end up going slower. Remember, not all Super Heroes know all their super powers over night, so don't freak out if you don't either. But you will have one advantage over most Super Heroes...the chance to actually get paid for using your newfound super powers! Have fun, and keep coloring!!

You can contact Aaron at
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In response to the World Trade Tower tragedy of September 11th, Paul Sizer will be offering an art print honoring the New York City firefighters and rescue workers who lost their lives. The money generated by sales of the 11" x 17" art print will go directly to The New York Fire 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund, a relief service that provides financial support to the families of the firefighters and rescue workers who died saving others during the attack. Blue Line Pro, the publishers of Sizer's comic series LITTLE WHITE MOUSE, have stepped up to the plate and will facilitate the production and sales of the print through their own online store. Sizer will oversee the entire project and personally forward the donations collected to the fund's administrators.

The Little White Mouse Benefit Print is available to view in the blinking "News Updates" section of the Little White Mouse Flash website (www.littlewhitemouse.com) . From there, people can link directly to the exclusive sales page within the Blue Line Pro online store (www.bluelinepro.com) or to The New York Fire 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund website for more information. For a small donation of \$10.00 or more, supporters will receive one 11" x 17" LWM Benefit digital art print on hi-gloss photo grade paper, mailed directly to them. People can pay either by credit card at Blue Line Pro's special PayPal (lwmbenefit@bluelinepro.com), by phone at 859-282-0086 or mail to:
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"It's certainly easier to write about having boundless hope in a comic book story than to actually manifest it in real life..."

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